THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
MAHATMA GANDHI

L

(June-August 1932)

THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

March 1972 (Chaitra 1894)

PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR, THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION, NEW DELHI-1
AND PRINTED IN INDIA BY SHANTILAL HARJIVAN SHAH,
NAVAJIVAN PRESS, AHMEDABAD-14

PREFACE

The peaceful tenor of Gandhiji's life in jail reflected in the previous volume came to an end during the period (June 1 to August 31, 1932) covered in this volume. It was disturbed, first, by a change in the Government's policy in regard to his correspondence resulting in considerable delay in clearing both outgoing and incoming mail, and then by the news of the passing away of his closest personal friend, Dr. Pranjivan Mehta. Finally came the announcement, on August 17, of Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald's award, recognizing the Depressed Classes as a minority community entitled to separate electorates In keeping with his declared intention to resist any such decision with his life (*vide* Volumes XLVIII and XLIX), Gandhiji wrote to the Prime Minister informing him that he would embark on "a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind" from the noon of September 20. The fast, he said, would cease "if during its progress the British Government, of its own motion or under pressure of public opinion, revise their decision and withdraw their scheme of communal electorates for the 'depressed' classes . . . ". The step, Gandhiji added, was "but the due fulfilment of the scheme of life, which I have tried for more than a quarter of a century, apparently not without considerable success" (pp. 383-4).

Already in May a conflict had started between Gandhiji and the Government over the issue of permitting Mirabehn to visit him in jail. The volume opens with a letter informing her that he had "decided to stop the interviews from next week" if the Government did not change their attitude. As he explained in a letter to the Inspector-General of Prisons, Gandhiji had "long ceased to make any distinction between family members and others", and therefore, if he could not see a co-worker like Mirabehn, he would also not like to see other visitors, most of whom were his relations or Ashram inmates (p. 21). The decision, he admitted to Devdas, would shock Kasturba the most. "But", he said, "she is born to endure shocks. All those who form or keep connections with me must pay a heavy price" (p. 250). Reasoning along similar lines Gandhiji told Devdas also, when the latter was ill in Gorakhpur jail, that he "would not like to ask anybody from the western part to run up to Gorakhpur". "If I don't practise my philosophy on you", he asked, "on whom else should I? . . . God is your relations and your friends and your parents; all

others are so only in name" (p. 50). Vallabhbhai Patel however, prevailed upon Gandhiji to send a wire to the Governor of the U.P. requesting Devdas's transfer to a jail situated in a place with healthier climate.

The difficulty regarding the correspondence took nearly a month to be resolved, and it was not before Gandhiji had addressed a strong letter of protest to the Inspector-General of Prisons that the Government yielded. "This delay", he said, "in sending my letters to their destination seems to me to be highly unjust to me and hardly becoming for the Government. . . . I know no reason for this vexatious change in the disposition of my correspondence" (p. 275). Commenting, two days later, on the Government's revised instructions regarding his correspondence in Gujarati, Gandhiji charged that they betrayed "want of confidence in Indian officials as a class and, naturally therefore, a disregard of the great languages of the country spoken by the millions of its inhabitants". "It hurts me to think", he added, "that no Indian official knowing the respective languages are considered fit or trustworthy enough to decide whether letters I write in Gujarati or Hindi or Urdu do or do not come within the permissible limits" (p. 280).

These letters seem to have had the desired effect. The clearing of the outgoing mail became regular once again and just at the right time, for on August 4, the very next day after the new instructions authorizing the Jail Superintendent to deal with the outgoing mail were received (p. 310), Gandhiji learnt of the passing away of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta in Rangoon. The death of his "lifelong faithful friend" (p. 327) was not only a personal loss to Gandhiji; he also felt deeply concerned about the welfare of Dr. Mehta's three surviving sons, one of whom, Ratilal, who lived near the Ashram at Sabarmati, used to suffer from attacks of insanity and another, Maganlal, the youngest, had gone abroad for study. Writing to H. S. L. Polak on the same day, Gandhiji hoped that Dr. Mehta "had preserved his original circumspection to make suitable financial arrangements for Maganlal's studies", and added, "I feel that I am not by his people's side at the present moment. But not my will, let His be done, now and for ever" (p. 328). "What will happen to Magan now?" he asked in a letter to Dr. Mehta's nephew, and added: "A beautiful nest is in danger of being ruined. . . . But I am unable to do anything from here to keep his nest whole, and that makes me unhappy" (p. 329). "If I had been free," Gandhiji wrote to Chhaganlal, Doctor's eldest son, "I would be by your side now. Perhaps Doctor would have

drawn his last breath in my lap" (p 331). For a good many months from now on the affairs of Doctor's family remained one of Gandhiji's chief concerns

There were other deaths, too, during this period and in each case Gandhiji wrote to the bereaved with his rare combination of warm human sympathy and philosophical serenity Writing to C Rajagopalachari on the death of his son-in-law in the prime of his youth, Gandhiji said "I loathe to argue about death in the face of the tragedy that has overtaken you. You will say with Job, 'miserable comforter'. But I do feel that if we would know God, we have got to learn to rejoice in death" (p. 292). And similarly, writing to a Parsi correspondent on the loss of her brother, he said: "My whole heart goes out to you and your aged mother. . . But we do, or ought to, know that God is wholly good and wholly just" (p 294). To those bereaved his usual advice was to "forget the grief and plunge . . . in service . . ." (p. 295).

An important document in this volume is "History of the Satyagraha Ashram", which Gandhiji had commenced writing on April 5, 1932, and the last available portion of which is dated July 11. This is largely an exposition of the ideals which inspired the Ashram and an assessment of its efforts to live up to them "The history of the Ashram is taking a strange shape", Gandhiji wrote to Kakasaheb Kalelkar. "There is in it very little about individuals. I have explained what the Ashram observances are, and how they are being followed" (p. 278).

The Ashram, as Gandhiji explains, had its origin in a personal need and it was only in course of time that it came to be transformed into an institution for experiments in national regeneration. "Looking at the past in the light of the present", Gandhiji says, "I feel that an ashram was a necessary of life for me. As soon as I had a house of my own, my house was an ashram in this sense, for my life as a householder was not one of enjoyment but of duty discharged from day to day" (p. 188). This concern for dharma seems to have been as spontaneous as it was deep, and the *Autobiography* traces how it progressed and became stronger from stage to stage in his life. It crystallized into a concrete plan of action after his reading of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. Founding the Phœnix Settlement in 1904 was the first step, as Gandhiji explains in the "History", in the evolution of his ashram ideal. The next step, the vow of *brahmacharya* in 1906, also grew out of a personal need, but the two subsequent steps mentioned in the "History", namely, the establishment of Tolstoy Farm near Johan-

nesburg in 1911 and the conversion, in 1912, of Phœnix into a colony for satyagrahis, were the outcome of Gandhiji's developing concept of satyagraha as a way of life and his acceptance of discipline in personal life as a necessary and effective means of fitting oneself for national service. In India, the ideal expanded still further and the Ashram was conceived as an experiment in community living based on truth, ahimsa and other ethical elements of the Indian spiritual tradition, "to remedy what it thought were defects in our national life from the religious, economic and political standpoints" (p. 192). This orientation of ethical discipline and spiritual *sadhana* to a social purpose was the creative feature of Gandhiji's Ashram which distinguished it from the ancient models, and which he probably had in view when he claimed, as he often did, that the Ashram was his most important creation and his success or failure as leader should be judged by the success or failure of the Ashram.

The Ashram vows were based in the main on the traditional *yamaniyamas*, but the attempt was to observe them in the spirit as much as in the letter. Gandhiji claims no outstanding success in this attempt. On the contrary he admits that the Ashram was "far, far indeed, from its ideal of truth", and doubtless this was true of the other observances as well. But he claims that "the men in charge of the Ashram are wide awake, fully conscious of their imperfections and constantly trying to make sure that untruth does not find a foothold anywhere" (p. 197). Accepting full responsibility for the failures of the Ashram, Gandhiji nevertheless asks: " . . . was I to leave the Ashram, and resort to some Himalayan cave and impose silence upon myself?" That, he believed, would be sheer cowardice. "The quest of truth cannot be prosecuted in a cave. . . . One may live in a cave in certain circumstances, but the common man can be tested only in society" (p. 191). Gandhiji was confident that "if only the men at the top are true to themselves, the Ashram is sure to stand the test, no matter how hard it is", for if the individual seeker "is wide awake and is striving constantly, there is no limit to his power" as there is none to "the potency of truth" (p. 197).

The boldest experiment in the Ashram was probably in regard to the vow of *brahmacharya*. Men and women lived and worked together and many of them enjoyed "considerable freedom in meeting one another", for the Ashram ideal was that one member "should have the same freedom in meeting another as is enjoyed by a son in meeting his mother or by a brother in meeting his sister" (p. 210). For a *brahmachari*, Gandhiji asserts, woman is not

the "doorkeeper of hell" but is "an incarnation of our Mother who is in Heaven". This freedom, Gandhiji admitted, involved "to a certain extent a deliberate imitation of life in the West" (pp. 210-1) and he was fully aware of the risks that it carried. But he trusted to God, who is the "Master Potter". If, as Gandhiji rightly claims, the women in the Ashram had "imbibed the spirit of freedom and self-confidence as no other class of women have done to my knowledge", it was because they were "placed on a footing of absolute equality with the men in all activities" (pp. 234-5). As he had said in a letter to Premabehn Kantak, Gandhiji did not admit "any differences between men and women except those created by Nature" (p. 91). His views in this regard seem to have changed gradually. In an intimate letter to his son Ramdas, he wrote: "My ideas about the relations between husband and wife have changed of course. I would not like any of you to behave towards his wife as I did towards Ba" (p. 354).

A similar softening is noted by him in his attitude to other Ashram inmates. After years of unremitting vigilance to educate members of his family and Ashram workers for the ideal of disciplined and dedicated life which he had set before them, Gandhiji could, he told Ramdas in the same letter, now influence people's behaviour with a mere rebuke and, therefore, felt "the slightest degree of strictness to be as heavy as the weight of the Himalayas" (p. 353). One reason for this relaxation of will was that Gandhiji had become "less exacting" to himself. "The body", he said, "does not obey me. I naturally feel reluctant to ask others to do what I myself cannot" (p. 354). Even though we get ill through our own faults, he advised Mirabehn, we should not "always be chiding ourselves when we do get ill" (p. 407)

Gandhiji advised similar detachment in dealing with one's mental problems also. To feel miserable because of impure thoughts was "self-made hell", he told a correspondent. "You should not brood over the fact that you get impure thoughts. Instead, you should go on as if they never troubled you" (p. 24). But this did not mean lessening of vigilance against such thoughts. Just as we clean out daily the dust in our houses, we should expel impure thoughts from our minds; instead of hiding them, we should tell some friend about them (p. 55). The votary of truth lives a spontaneous and open life; he appears as he is for there is "unity in his thought, speech and action" (p. 285). To achieve this unity, one has to learn the art of thinking; if we can master it, "everything else will follow in beautiful order". The yoga of skill in work demands thoughtfulness in action; scavenging no less

than spinning can become *yajna* if it is done with a mind alert and a heart of compassion (pp. 136-7). But idle thoughts, plans and resolutions not taken seriously, are "mental incontinence" and amount to a "violation of *brahmacharya*" (pp. 109-10). Control over such "idle thoughts" could be a source of immeasurable power (p. 26).

The way to such psychological self-mastery, according to Gandhiji, is prayer and work. Prayer removes the self-created obstacle to the operation of the Infinite Power in us (pp. 248-9), for "man becomes what he thinks" and "Ramanama follows this law" (p. [illegible]). A man or woman who is spiritually awake "will think every thought with God as witness and as its Master . . . Such a person . . . will every moment feel Rama dwelling in his heart" (p. [illegible]).

But prayer, though essential, was not enough. "All our prayers, fastings and observances are empty nothings so long as we do not feel a live kinship with all life" (p. [illegible]) and "all our philosophy is vain, if it does not enable us to rejoice in the company of fellow-beings and their service" (p. [illegible]). "Man can achieve real and enduring purification of heart only through work" (p. 111), though in exceptional cases, Gandhiji conceded, "the thoughts of a man possessing a pure heart are an activity by themselves and can produce far-reaching results" (p. [illegible]). This mental *yajna*, like the *yajna* of constructive work, demands identification with all creatures, and has nothing to do with the "heartless doctrine" of the greatest good of the greatest number. "The only real, dignified, human doctrine", according to Gandhiji, "is the greatest good of all, and this can only be achieved by uttermost self-sacrifice" (p. 11).

While ever ready to help with advice Gandhiji was anxious to "cure people of excessive dependence" on himself (p. [illegible]). His talks and writings on spiritual matters had "individuals in view" and their mainspring was "not the intellect, but the heart" (pp. 79-80). The inner voice, which he recognized and had to obey, could not be "described in words". This working harmony of heart, mind and body, which Gandhiji never "suddenly felt as some new experience", had indeed become his *sahaja* or normal nature. Hence his claim or confession that his "spiritual life has grown without my being conscious of the fact in the same way as hair grows on our body" (p. 126).

NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text generally spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages, where these are in English, have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and interviews, as also passages which are not by Gandhiji, have been set up in small type. In reports of speeches and interviews slight changes and omissions, where necessary, have been made in passages not attributed to Gandhiji.

While translating from Gujarati and Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

The date of an item has been indicated at the top right-hand corner; if the original is undated, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary. The date given at the end of an item alongside the source is that of publication. The writings are placed under the date of publication, except where they carry a date-line or where the date of writing has special significance and is ascertainable.

References to Volume I of this series are to the January 1969 edition.

In the source-line, the symbol S.N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G.N. refers to documents, M.M.U. to the reels of the Mobile Microfilm Unit and S.G. to the photostats of the Sevagram Collection available in the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; C.W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Appendix provides background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and a chronology for the period covered by the volume are also provided at the end.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For material in this volume, we are indebted to the Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust and Sangrahalaya, the Navajivan Trust and the Gujarat Vidyapith Granthalaya, Ahmedabad; the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; National Archives of India, New Delhi; the Home Department, Maharashtra Government, Bombay; Shri Benarsilal Bazaj; Shri Bhau Panse; Shri Bhagwanji P. Pandya; Smt. Champabehn Mehta; Shri D. B. Kalelkar, New Delhi; Shri Dhirubhai Jhaveri; Smt. E. Mary Barr; Smt. Gangabehn Vaidya; Shri G. D. Birla, Calcutta; Smt. Hariichchha Desai; Shri Jairamdas Doulatram; Shri Kanubhai Mashruwala, Akola; Smt. Lakshmibehn Khare, Ahmedabad, Smt. Lilavati Asar; Smt. Manubehn Mashruwala; Smt. Mirabehn, Austria; Shri Narandas Gandhi, Rajkot; Smt Nirmalabehn, Bombay; Smt. Nirmala Shroff; Shri Parasram Mehrotra; Shri Prabhudas Gandhi; Smt. Premabehn Kantak; Smt. Premlila Thackersey; Shri Purushottam D. Saraiya; Shri Ram Narayan N. Pathak; Shri S. D. Satavlekar; Shri Shantikumar Morarjee; Smt. Shanta Shankarbhai Patel; Shri Shamal Raval; Smt. Tehmina Khambhatta; Smt. Vanamala Desai; Shri Valji G. Desai; the publishers of the books: *Ashram Observances in Action*, *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, *Bapuna Patro 6: G. S. Gangabehnne*, *Bapuna Patro-4: Manibehn Patelne*, *Bapuna Patro 9: Narandas Gandhine*, Pt. I, *Bapuni Prasadi*, *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, *Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, *Satyagrahashramno Itihas*; and the following newspapers and journals: *Advance*, *Bhatnagar Samachar*, *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Hindustan Times*.

For research and reference facilities, we owe thanks to the Research and Reference Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, National Archives of India, and Shri Pyarelal Nayyar, New Delhi; and for assistance in photo-printing documents, to the Photo Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi.

CONTENTS

1. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

June 1, 1932

CHI. MIRA[1],

Your letter arrived today.

I have now decided to stop the interviews from next week if the decision is delayed.[2] They will be resumed if the decision is favourable.

The left elbow has proved worse than the right hand. All work with the left elbow has stopped and presently it will be packed in splints. Doctors are sure that it is nothing but the strain caused by the uninterrupted working of the wheel from day to day. I am thankful that I have now acquired full control over the Magan wheel. Spinning, therefore, continues and will continue merrily, unless the right elbow strikes from sympathy.

You will be glad to learn that today I weighed 106½ lb. This is a good record. So you see that there is not the slightest cause for worry even on account of the elbow.

Your saltless experiment is producing interesting results. I should, however, wait before ascribing all the good results to the absence of salt.

I wrote to Verrier[3] last week care of Khambhatta. I hope he got my letter. Yes, it is a good idea, his going to England for recuperation. The sooner he goes the better. It was very wrong of Shamrao to have had that fever. Have you seen him?

I am sorry about Damodardas. The enclosed is for him.

It is a superstition to think that saltless is tasteless. Salt kills flavour. I have known people not touch things with salt in them. Taste is a matter of habit. I suppose you do take butter and bread. These do contain salt. Your experiment is one of reducing the quantity of free salt. The effect produced on you, therefore, is due to reduction, not entire absence of salt in your food. But that does not matter. Nor need you worry that you are taking

[1] Superscription in this and other letters to Mirabehn is in Devanagari

[2] Gandhiji had requested the Government to reconsider their decision not to permit Mirabehn to see him in Yeravda Jail as otherwise he might not avail himself of the permission to receive other visitors, *vide* Vol. XLIX, "Letter to E. E Doyle", 19-5-1932, also "Letter to E E Doyle", 9-6-1932

[3] On May 27; *vide* Vol. XLIX.

some salt somehow. Let well alone. Do you ever see Manilal? Or is he still not there at all?

Love from us all.

BAPU

[PS.]

Verrier suggested that we should sing a Christian[1] hymn every Friday at evening prayer. So Mahadev began "Lead, Kindly Light" in Gujarati[2]. And this we shall continue every Friday. Please tell Verrier this if he has not yet got my letter.

From the original. C. W. 6224 Courtesy Mirabehn. Also G.N 9690

2. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

YERAVDA MANDIR[3],
June 1, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM[4],

I was glad to hear that Nirmala's enthusiasm for Hindi was increasing. By all means teach Hindi poems. I do not know whether the lines on the palms (of our hands) have any significance, but there is no profit in trying to know what the future holds whether through these or through astrology or by any other means; on the contrary, it is definitely harmful. And, one who is a lover of the *Gita*, i.e., who leaves the results of one's work to God, should never desire to know the future I have not received the booklet, but will go through it when I get it. Destruction of small creatures as a result of essential activities is unavoidable. As far as possible, we should be careful about those which we can see with our naked eyes; more than this, we cannot do. Tiny insects like ants are not crushed under our feet when we walk. They are protected by their very smallness. But larger insects may be so crushed. Hence it has been regarded as our duty to look at the ground in front of us while walking. All these precautions are signs of our kind-heartedness, but non-violence is something more far-reaching and wonderful. It should

[1] The source has 'Xian'.

[2] *Premal Jyoti*, by Narasinhrao Divetia; *vide* also p. 34.

[3] Literally, Yeravda temple, that is, Yeravda Central Prison, where Gandhiji was imprisoned from January 4, 1932 to May 8, 1933. This place-line is not reproduced in subsequent letters.

[4] A khadi worker and a Hindi teacher; also a member of Gandhiji's secretariat for some time

be apparent in all our work, in our relationship with one another and in all our dealings with our fellowmen. We should remain unconcerned when we see a peacock devouring a snake. The latter is food for the former and we cannot interfere with it. Tulsidas's quatrain[1] about women which you have quoted is not only not applicable to all women but it is not even a criticism of women. It criticizes man's sensuality. Tulsidasji's point in it is that man, being lustful, thinks only of women, and he has written these lines to show what man becomes like when he is seized by lust.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 7500 Also C W 4977 Courtesy Parasram Mehrotra

3. *LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR*

June 1, 1932

BHAI RAMESHWAR,

I got both your postcard and your letter. The conclusion which you have drawn from my letter is correct. If, instead of attempting a big leap, we take small steps according to our capacity, our enthusiasm for the work will increase and with that our self-confidence. I am not worried about Jamnalalji's loss of weight, as he otherwise keeps good health And, as for Vinoba, let him refrain from milk and ghee so long as he can maintain his health and strength. I am satisfied with the message which he has sent.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N 179

4. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*[2]

June 2, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

There is no reply yet regarding Mirabehn. I, therefore, think that I should stop seeing visitors pending the reply. So do not send any names for the next week. I will send you a

[1] "Intellect, valour, virtue and truth are all like fish, while woman is like a bait, say the wise"

[2] The article "Concerning *Titiksha* and *Yajna*" (*vide* pp 15-7) was sent with this letter.

wire if a favourable reply is received. Mahadev desires that Durga[1] should be informed about this.

BAPU

SJT. NARANDAS GANDHI
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI
B.B.&.C.I. RLY.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C. W. 8231 Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

5. LETTER TO FEROZABEHN TALEYARKHAN

June 2, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I was glad to read your letter. Bhai Nariman had not given me your message. But since I did not come across you anywhere I concluded that you might have been out of Bombay. I hope you are keeping good health. Seeing me will, I think, not be easy. Most probably all my visitors will be stopped. We shall however know the actual position when you come. Sardar[2] and Mahadev Desai are with me. Please write to me from time to time.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. FEROZABEHN TALEYARKHAN
C/O POST MASTER
BODH GAYA
BIHAR

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 9775

[1] Mahadev Desai's wife
[2] Vallabhbhai Patel

6. *LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

June 2, 1932

CHI. PRABHAVATI[1],

I have your letter. I am writing this letter deliberately in Hindi so that it may be delivered to you without delay. I have written to you at least twice. The letters have been dispatched from here. I cannot make out how they failed to reach you. You should take milk and fruit. Jayaprakash says he is all right. My health is satisfactory. I shall write at length after hearing from you. Sardar and Mahadev are with me. Blessings to Sarup, Kisan and Kanta.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRIMATI PRABHAVATI DEVI
'A' CLASS PRISONER
CENTRAL JAIL
LUCKNOW

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3422

7. *LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH*

June 2, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA[2],

As you are left-handed, you should also try to perform every function with your right hand. The human race increases through births. Do you know how you came into being? Other men and women came into being in the same way as you did. Human beings owe their birth to their parents.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5772. Also C.W. 2996. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

[1] Wife of Jayaprakash Narayan

[2] Daughter of Narahari Parikh, an associate of Gandhiji

8. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Tuesday, May 31/June 3, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have practically decided that tomorrow, Wednesday, will be the last day when I will see visitors. If the Government continue to delay its reply in regard to Mirabehn, I think I should assume that it will be negative and should stop seeing visitors for the time being. I can start seeing them again if finally the decision is favourable.

If Harilal wants to vent his anger on Bali[1], let him do so. Bali is strong enough to face it, and knows how to deal with him. Whether or not that is so, if the path of duty is clear before us we must follow it without regard to consequences. Is it not because people are concerned about consequences that they often forsake the path of dharma? The *Gita* was composed to drive this one lesson home, and it repeats the idea again and again in every possible context.

As we gradually understand more clearly the aim behind the five minutes' silence [at prayer time], we shall feel its grandeur with greater and greater force. Vasumati Thakore is being properly looked after. The doctor said that she must have suffered from the disease for a long time.

If a labourer willingly agrees to obey the Ashram rules, do not discharge him even if there is no work for him. If he himself wishes to leave, that would of course be another matter. We should not discharge any person, who is otherwise good, merely for the sake of economy. A labourer will never be a burden on us. And the Ashram may engage paid labourers, but we shall be worthy of its great ideals only if we continue to work with our own hands or join them in work.

Don't let Dhiru and Kusum return for some time yet. It will be a great error to suppose that, after their health has improved a little, they will be all right in the Ashram. They should return only after their health has become quite strong. If they observe the Ashram rules where they are staying and do what-

[1] Balibehn Vora, sister-in-law of Harilal Gandhi

ever work their health permits, that would be as good as living in the Ashram.

Do not waste your time and energy in inquiring about Ba's letters. I got one postcard written by her. How many Chharas[1] are there and where do they live? From what part of the country do they come? What is their language? We should think what our duty towards them is, irrespective of whether or not they harass us. See if anything is possible in this matter.

I have nothing more to say about the Magan spinning-wheel. My hand seems to be fairly well set on it. I could also guess today from which part the sound comes. I am using just now the slivers sent by Chhakkaddas. I am naturally tempted to spin yarn of fine count from such good slivers. Today I drew 22 rounds from one sliver. Each sliver weighs less than one anna. The count of the yarn, I guess, must be about 30. I spun today yarn of that count at the rate of 110 rounds per hour. For yarn less fine than that I have already reached the speed of 130.

I have preserved Totaramji's[2] letter. I even made two copies. One I sent to Gangabehn and the other to Chhaganlal Joshi. If Totaramji has not kept a copy, I may return the original or send a copy from here. Because of the uncertainty in regard to visitors, I have not asked for permission for Chitalia and others. As for Thakkar Bapa, I am afraid I won't be able to write about him from here in any case. It is enough that Bhansali at least sends news about him from time to time.

Lakshmidas did get my detailed letter in which I had explained how the change in the spindle-bearer in the Gandiva spinning-wheel immediately resulted in improvement in count and speed, for he has acknowledged it. I, therefore, think that there has been some misunderstanding. I got a letter from Krishna, but she does not mention anything in it about Choudhariji, nor have I received a letter from him. Which Choudhariji did you refer to? Ba seems to have lost much weight but I hope that she and Navin are improving now. If you interpreted Mirabehn's letter to refer to fasting, you were not correct. She spoke about the mockery of fasting, about eating only one meal on the 6th and the 13th of the National Week[3].

[1] An ex-criminal tribe of central Gujarat

[2] Totaram Sanadhya, a farmer who had come from Fiji and joined the Ashram

[3] Celebrated in April ever since the starting of the satyagraha movement in 1919

The Narayanappa affair is a shameful one. Now that the guilty party in this theft has been found out, I suppose we must believe that Bhagwanji's suspicion, too, was correct. If, however, Narayanappa is sincerely repentant and if all of you think that he may be permitted to stay on, by all means let him do so. The spinning *yajna* will be complete if everybody hands over the yarn which he or she spun for that *yajna*. There can be no doubt at all that such *yajna* will remain incomplete so long as those who take part in it wish to keep back the yarn for their own use. The rule which I have suggested is that everybody should hand over all the yarn spun by himself to the Ashram, and he may get from the Ashram the khadi required for clothes. One should spin yarn of the highest count that one can, and accept from the Ashram as coarse a cloth as one's body can tolerate or as may fall to one's share. All this is implied in the vow of non-possession and in the ideal of self-dedication. However, I do not have the courage to make this a compulsory rule for all. Moreover, I am no more in your midst and, therefore, since the matter has come up for discussion, I am merely pointing out what the Ashram dharma demands. Read this out to all and explain what I have said, and then leave it to every individual person to accept from it as much as he or she can. But we can certainly make this rule, that everyone should wind yarn into neat hanks at the end of each day or week and hand them over with details of name, place, number of rounds, etc., and, when one wants to get cloth woven from the yarn, one may ask for the hanks according to the rule which one may have accepted for oneself. I think this is absolutely essential for a correct record to be preserved.

What is Rambhau's speed, with one hand, on the Magan spinning-wheel and what is the count of the yarn?

Mahadev's yarn of 40 counts is piling up for he spins 630 rounds daily. You should get ready *rach*[1] and *fani*[2] of the type necessary for weaving this yarn. We should be able to weave yarn of 40 counts without the least difficulty.

I am of the view that we should build a regular tomb over Imam Saheb's[3] grave. But you should consult a trustworthy Muslim and find out what the proper thing would be. Maulvi Saheb Gulam Nadvi[4], who was a teacher in the Vidyapith for

[1] & [2] Weaving tools

[3] Abdul Kadir Bawazeer, Gandhiji's associate since South African period and an Ashram inmate; *vide* Vol. XLIX, "Imam Saheb-I", 7-3-1932.

[4] Abu Zafar Nadvi

some time and had good relations with Imam Saheb and who was present at the funeral, will most probably be in Ahmedabad just now. You may consult him. There is no hurry, of course. If Pyare Ali[1] himself has made any suggestion in this regard, let me know it.

All the persons whose names you sent to me came and saw me. Anandlal's Ranchhod also had joined the party, so they were six in all. But that may be permitted occasionally. Now send no more names till you hear from me.

June 3, 1932

Send, by parcel, one pound of asafoetida pills for Gangabehn. She requires them urgently.

I did not keep a copy of the article[2] sent last time, thinking that I would get one from you sooner or later, but I have not received any so far.

I hope I shall get one by and by.

BAPU

[PS.]

This is the 29th letter in today's packet.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M M.U /I Also C. W 8230 Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

9. *LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH*

June 3, 1932

CHI. MANI[3],

Patience is learnt through long effort. The secret of regarding sorrow as joy is learnt by leaving everything to God. It is for this very reason that those three verses[4] have been included in the prayer for women. I hope you do remember these verses. Through effort, one can learn to bear suffering.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N 5969 Also C W 3286 Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

[1] A business man from Bombay

[2] "The Cat—A Teacher", 22-5-1932; *vide* Vol XLIX.

[3] Wife of Narahari Parikh

[4] Containing Draupadi's prayer to Lord Krishna when she was being disrobed by the Kauravas, *vide* Vol XLIV, p 399, No. 56.

10. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

June 3, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I write this slip merely because I think I must write something to you. Don't forget to send the Urdu books. If visits stop now, send them by registered book post.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10288. Also C.W. 6736. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

11. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

June 3, 1932

CHI. KAKA[1],

I do get news about you from time to time. All the same, when you can next write letters, write to me and tell me how you are. . . .[2] The pain in your back must have disappeared now. I hope the rains have had no ill effect on your health. Who are your companions? Recently I have been spinning on the Magan spinning-wheel. The left elbow is paining and the doctors say all it needs is rest. Since the pain has been caused by the exertion of drawing the thread in spinning for many years, I learnt to draw the thread with the right hand on the Gandiva spinning-wheel. But the doctors advised me not to exert the left hand even for rotating the wheel. Even otherwise, I had intended to learn spinning on the Magan spinning-wheel, and this advice gave me one more reason for taking it up. And so I have started spinning on it. I had a good deal of difficulty in learning to use it, but I may say that I have now acquired fairly good control over it. When I had good slivers, I had attained a speed of 150 rounds [per hour]. Just now I have been spinning with the worst possible kind of slivers. The speed is less but

[1] Dattatreya Balkrishna Kalelkar (b. 1885), popularly known as Kakasaheb, a co-worker of Gandhiji since 1915

[2] Seven lines here were censored by the jail authorities.

not much less than 100. I give some time to Urdu. And daily I read some book or other apart from star gazing. I have taken up the study in right earnest. I would not now show myself a complete ignoramus in discussing the subject with you. Among the books which I have seen, I have found Flammarion's book the most useful so far. Dikshit's book[1] seems to be the result of considerable labour, but, from a learner's point of view, it requires a good deal of improvement. Patwa's *Akashdarshan* can be of some help, but the book is very superficial. There ought to be one good book in Gujarati, which should also give some information relating to astronomy. Two separate books in Gujarati for this purpose are not a practical proposition We must have a book which would give both scientific knowledge of astronomy and practical guidance. If you were with me here, I would have made you write such a book and I also would have made some contribution to it. I have come to take so much interest in the subject and perceived such deep religious significance in this study that, were not my knowledge altogether inadequate, I myself would have started writing such a book. I occasionally exchange letters with Hiralal on this subject. He has sent me two or three books. I read the biographies of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda written by Romain Rolland. One of them is being read by Mahadev now and the other by Sardar (Sardar's self-chosen job is to go through newspapers and to make beautiful envelopes from used brown paper or such other thick paper which we may get. Thus he is daily adding to the nation's wealth and dust is being turned into gold, so to say.)

Mahadev gives about five hours every day to carding and spinning. There is a friend of Chimanlal named Chhakkaddas who loves spinning very much. He has sent us beautiful slivers made from Cambodian and Navsari cotton. With those slivers Mahadev daily spins 650 rounds, the yarn being of 40 to 45 counts, and also cards an equal quantity from the cotton which we have received Hence we always have a good stock of slivers with us. My experiment of milkless diet continues. My weight is steady. All three of us are in good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Gangadevi[2] passed away about a month ago. She was perfectly calm at the time of death. Her death was worthy of an

[1] Shanker Balkrishna Dikshit's *Bharatiya Jyotishshastra*
[2] Wife of Totaram Sanadhya

Ashram inmate. Totaramji has sent, at my request, some very beautiful reminiscences of her. We can see from them that her life was truly great.

From the Gujarati original. C.W 9186. Courtesy D B Kalelkar

12. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

June 3, 1932

CHI. VIDYA[1],

Raw mangoes become spice or fruit when eaten as such. Collyrium should not be applied to the eyes for beautifying them. It can, however, be used as medicine for some eye-complaints.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 9429 Courtesy: Ravindra R Patel

13. LETTER TO BHAU PANSE

June 3, 1932

CHI. BHAU[2],

I have already answered your letter. Write to me if you have any fresh doubt.

Both my hands are disabled for plying the *takli*. The fingers have grown so weak that for the present I am unable to use them for manipulating the *takli*. The future rests with God. Thus I have to content myself with the reports of the progress made by others.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6730. Also C.W. 4173. Courtesy Bhau Panse

[1] Daughter of Raojibhai M. Patel

[2] He was an Ashram inmate.

14. LETTER TO D. V. PARACHURE SHASTRI[1]

June 3, 1932

All three of us were delighted to read your letter. How stupid of me to mistake Harolikar for Hukerikar. I am very bad at remembering names and faces. It gratifies me greatly that you are bearing with the disease so cheerfully. This is what I expected of you all.

I am pained to hear of your wife's ailment. Is someone looking after her? Has she any parents? I am sending you a bundle of slivers prepared by Mahadev. Do not hesitate to ask for more as our stock is always more than sufficient. Send me a list of the books you want, I shall try to procure them. Have you quoted that saying in reference to suicide from some book? My opinion in this matter is as follows: A person suffering from an incurable disease has the right to commit suicide if he cannot perform any service whatsoever and lives only as a result of the ministrations of others. Fasting unto death is infinitely superior to drowning oneself. A person's strength of character is tested in fasting, moreover it leaves scope for changing one's mind, which is both proper and necessary. But as long as he can perform the least bit of service, he is not justified in putting an end to his life. Although physical activity is an important and necessary feature of *yajna*, a physically disabled person can certainly perform mental *yajna* which is not totally unfruitful. A man by his pure thoughts alone can render service. He can also be engaged in giving useful advice and such like. The thoughts of a man possessing a pure heart are an activity by themselves and can produce far-reaching results.

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. 1, pp 198-9

[1] The addressee was at this time in the lepers' ward of Yeravda Central Prison.

15. LETTER TO JAL A. D. NAOROJI[1]

June 1, 1932

If Mr. Cooper's plough is what he claims it to be, I should have no objection to its use merely because it is a steel plough and therefore the village carpenter will be deprived of a portion of his work. I do not mind the partial deprivation of the carpenter if the plough increases the earning capacity of the farmer. But I have very grave doubts about the claims made by Mr. Cooper for the invention. At Sabarmati we have tried almost all improved ploughs manufactured in India and I think even others, but the claims made for each variety have not proved true in the long run. An experienced man has said that the indigenous plough is specially designed for the Indian soil. It conserves the soil, because it ploughs deep enough for the farmer's crops but never deep enough to do damage. Of course I do not claim to understand agriculture. I am simply giving you the testimony of those who have had considerable experience in these matters. What we have to remember is that all improved implements have to meet the peculiar conditions of India. There is nothing wrong in an engine plough in itself and it may be a great advantage to a man who owns thousands of acres of land, and has a cracked caky soil, which will not yield under the indigenous plough. What, however, we want is an implement that would suit owners of small holdings from one acre to three acres. . . .

I do not believe in the doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number. It means in its nakedness that in order to achieve the supposed good of 51 per cent the interest of 49 per cent may be, or rather, should be sacrificed. It is a heartless doctrine and has done harm to humanity. The only real, dignified, human doctrine is the greatest good of all, and this can only be achieved by uttermost self-sacrifice.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 200-1

[1] The addressee had written about Cooper's invention of a new plough capable of increasing the yield of crops by 15 to 150 per cent.

16. LETTER TO ANNE MARIE PETERSEN[1]

June 4, 1932

"Be careful for nothing" is one of the verses that has ever remained with me and taken possession of me. If God is, why need I care? He is the Infallible Caretaker. He is a foolish man who fusses although he is well protected.

Mahadeebhaini Diary, Vol 1, p 201

17. CONCERNING "TITIKSHA" AND "YAJNA"[2]

June 6, 1932

A friend[3] suffering from leprosy writes as follows.

> I am daily growing stronger in my faith that the best medicines for a person suffering from a disease like mine are *asanas*, *pranayama* and such other ordinary exercises and eating food earned through *yajna*. I spend my time in reading the *Gita*, singing *bhajans*, meditation and spinning more than 500 rounds of yarn daily. Our religion enjoins *titiksha* which means bearing all pains and miseries without opposing them even in thought, without worrying and without complaining. I am trying to cultivate such endurance, and I am discovering from experience that it is difficult to acquire such strength unless one works regularly for *yajna*. A person afflicted like me cannot do other forms of *yajna*, but, thanks be to God, I can do *yajna* by sweeping public roads, removing night-soil and spinning, and I find my happiness in doing these things and try to bear my misfortune. However, I often ask myself what my condition would be when the body became so weak that I could do no useful work. The Shastras emphatically declare that a life without *yajna* is as good as death, that it is a burden and an affliction to the world. You have said this repeatedly in your speeches and

[1] Member of the staff of the Danish Missionary Society in South India

[2] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 2-6-1932, *vide* pp 3-4

[3] D. V Parachure Shastri, *vide* "Letter to D V Parachure Shastri", p. 13.

writings and my experience, too, tells the same thing. If that is so, the question arises: "What is the duty of a person who is so seriously ill with a disease that he can do no useful work at all and must live on the service of others?" I even read in a Shastra that a person who suffered from such an incurable disease should give up his life by drowning himself or by some similar means.

This is only a summary in my own language of a beautiful letter. I wish to draw a lesson for ourselves from this letter, namely, that all of us should cultivate this friend's capacity for endurance and, even when ill with a disease, should go on doing useful work as long as the body permits. That one must cultivate endurance and must do *yajna*—these are age-old ideals. We hear about them constantly in the Ashram. When, however, we read such things described by a person who is relating his own experience, they seem something new and fresh and the description has great power in it. We do not expect a person suffering from leprosy to be able to write in this manner or to feel thus. In most cases such persons, if they write about themselves, tell us how they suffer and complain about their misfortune. Here we find something different altogether, and hence I have summarized the letter for the inmates of the Ashram. The question which is raised in it also deserves attention.

We understand by *yajna* physical work voluntarily done for the service of others. But this need not be taken to mean that a person who is physically too weak to do such work performs no *yajna*. Such a person can serve with his mental capacities in many ways, and his work would most certainly be *yajna*. But we can conceive of a case in which the person does not have the necessary degree of purity or sufficient mental strength for such *yajna*, and yet he is extremely eager to do it, has lost the desire to live, dislikes having to be served by others and is convinced that his disease is incurable. I think that, in such circumstances, a person who has the necessary strength of mind may certainly give up his life, one may even say that it is his duty to do so. But to tell anybody that it is his duty to give up his life will probably shock him. It is not right for a healthy person to tell another who is suffering from a disease that it is his duty to give up his life. Such a remark may even upset that person. But I think that that is not likely to happen in this case, and so I have cautiously stated what seemed right to me. It is certainly desirable that we should cease to fear death and give up the intense clinging to life which impels us to try to save

it by trying every possible remedy and at the cost of infinite trouble to people around us. My attitude in what I have written is that, if a thoughtful person afflicted with an incurable disease regards it his duty to give up his life, we need not think that what he does is absolutely wrong.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati. M M U /11

18. *LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA*

June 7, 1932

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter My health seems to be well enough. The weight is satisfactory. I weighed 106½ lb. today. Doctors tell me that I am suffering from tennis elbow as a result of spinning continuously for years, rest is the only cure for it So I have to give complete rest to my elbow for 3-4 weeks. I started using the Magan spinning-wheel for this reason Before that I was using my left hand for plying the wheel instead of holding the sliver. The doctors were not satisfied with this but they agreed to my turning the wheel with the foot. But now my elbow has been put in splints in order to prevent the least movement. Let us see now if the doctors' diagnosis is correct or otherwise. You have no cause for worry, there being no pain except in moving the arm.

Do send me the khadi woven out of the yarn spun by your sister. I overlooked writing on this matter as your letter was not in front of me. I have decided to study economics as much as I can while I am still here. I took up the study of other books in the expectation of a long stay here. Anyway I shall start on economics very soon.

I follow what you say about running the mill all day and night. So often have I had the idea of making a detailed observation of your mills but it came to nothing. I wish to watch the condition of the labourers with my own eyes. We are all doing well.

BAPU

From Hindi. C W. 7899. Courtesy G D Birla

19. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

[*June 8, 1932*][1]

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter came in today. Yes, the left arm is in splints. The passers-by who do not know the cause must be pitying me. If the packing of the elbow does not improve it, I might have to try milk. If I do, I shall also try the saltless experiment. But only when I learnt that there was no such thing as a thorough saltless experiment, I accepted the medical friends' advice and began taking salt. Milk contains plenty of salt as does water. And at a seaside place, you continually drink in salt. And yet there is decidedly some advantage in not taking additional free salt as a condiment. What we get in water, milk and air is perhaps quite enough for the system. I have a prejudice in favour of saltless diet. Only I do not want to abstain from it religiously, unless I feel the necessity. Meanwhile your observations are accumulating. They will be useful.

I do not quite understand the position about Verrier. What does he propose to do now? If the extension is only up to July, what is to happen thereafter? I have never understood the passport intricacies. If he cannot go to England, he must go to a hill station. Almora may be a suitable place. If he is and is to remain vegetarian, he must copy your diet as closely as possible. Very little starch, no vegetable proteid in the shape of pulses, plenty of milk and fresh green vegetables. No potatoes and such other starchy vegetables. No condiments. Has he had my letter?

What may be regarded as final answer has been received about you. The Government say they are informed that you were directing the movement before imprisonment and therefore you could not see me. I have combated that statement[2] and have said that you were under instructions not to take part in civil disobedience movement and that you were confining yourself to the khadi work and sending reports to friends! If I

[1] The source has "8-5-1932" which is a slip. Gandhiji's arm was put in splints on June 5, 1932; *vide* entry under date June 5, 1932 in "Diary, 1932" appearing at the end of this volume. *Bapu's Letters to Mira* also gives this date.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to E. E. Doyle", p. 21.

have erred, please correct me and I shall have no hesitation in correcting myself[1] I do not know whether anything will result from my letter. Anyway, I am regarding the reply as a final decision and have accordingly asked N[arandas Gandhi] not to send anybody. I stopped interviews last week in anticipation, i e., I did not see Manibehn and Dahyabhai.

You should rejoice in this additional trial and be thankful that we can write to each other. But we should rejoice even if that stops Nothing happens without divine permission And how can we grieve over what He permits?

You should correspond with Radha regularly I believe your reading of her. I must not write about it. It will upset her. She may take things from you You should make time for writing to her. I believe that her expenses are met from the Ashram and that she has not been now for some months a burden on Damodardas

You will have another talk with Damodardas and leave his place, if it will at all ease his burden.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original C W 6220 Courtesy Mirabehn Also G N 9686

20. *LETTER TO H. S. L POLAK*[2]

June 8, 1932

She[3] has aged considerably—in some respects perhaps more than I have. Spiritually she has made wonderful progress . .

It will take me many incarnations to become disillusioned with the slowness of the charkha The slowness of the charkha is perhaps its most appealing part for me But it has so many attractions for me that I can never get tired of it. It has a perennial interest for me Its implications are growing on me and I make discoveries of its beauties almost from day to day. I am not using a sewing machine in its place or at all. I know how the mistake crept into the papers My right elbow, having been used for turning the wheel, almost without a break for over ten years,

[1] According to the addressee this was correct

[2] Henry Solomon Leon Polak, a close associate of Gandhiji during the South African struggle He had written to Gandhiji "London papers report that you have taken up the sewing machine having been disillusioned with the slowness of charkha I don't believe it for a moment But it needs a prompt denial "

[3] Kasturba Gandhi

began to give pain, and the doctors here came to the conclusion that the pain was of the same type that tennis players often have after continuous use of the racquet. They therefore advised complete rest for the elbow. That might have meant cessation of spinning for some time, but for Prabhudas's invention. You know Prabhudas, Chhaganlal's son. His invention consists in turning the wheel with a pedal and thus freeing the right hand also for drawing the thread and practically doubling the output of yarn. I forestalled the doctors by having this wheel brought to me, and before the peremptory order to stop all work with the right elbow came, I was master of the pedal charkha called 'Magan charkha' after the late Maganlal. A stupid reporter who knew nothing about the invention, when he heard that I was moving the wheel with the pedal, came to the conclusion that I was working at the sewing machine and since there are Pressmen good enough to imagine many things of me and impute all sorts of things to me, they improved upon the false report by deducing disillusionment about the charkha from it. Now you have the whole story.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 208-9

21. A LETTER

June 8, 1932

Whatever your financial condition, bear this in mind:

(1) One who earns money has the right to lose it.

(2) There is no shame in losing money, but it is shameful, even sinful, to hide the fact of one's loss.

(3) One should never live beyond one's means. Though one may be living in a bungalow today, one should be prepared to live in a hut tomorrow.

(4) We need not feel ashamed if we do not have enough money to pay our creditors.

(5) Anybody who hands over to his creditors everything without keeping back a single pie for himself has fully repaid his debt.

(6) Wisdom lies first in not starting a business with borrowed money, but in case one has already done it, the next wise thing is to give away what one has and free oneself from one's debts.

You may go to the Ashram whenever you wish to.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 209-10

22. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

June 9, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE[1],

Major Bhandari[2] has informed me of the Government's decision about Shrimati Mirabai (Slade). I appreciate the frank reasons given for the decision. I do not know what the Government would call being "actively engaged in the furtherance of the civil disobedience movement". It is likely too that the Government are misinformed. Obviously Mirabai has had no chance of refuting the information given to them. I can only reiterate my statement that like several other companions of mine she has been intentionally, and for the movement itself, kept out of its civil resistance part But if Mirabai at any time was, or is now, actively engaged in the furtherance of the civil disobedience movement, my wife and my two sons were taking an active part in it Yet if they were not in prison, being members of my family, they would, I presume, be allowed to see me. As I have made it clear to the Government in previous communications, I have long ceased to make any distinction between family members and others. My co-workers are as much members of my family as the members so called.

Unless therefore the Government see their way to revise their decision, I must deny myself the pleasure of having weekly visitors. I enforced the self-denying ordinance on Saturday last. Indeed under the ruling given by the Government in Mirabai's case it would be a serious thing for me to take the responsibility of deciding in the case of Ashram inmates who should and who should not see me.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(2), Pt I, p 109

[1] Inspector-General of Prisons, Bombay Presidency

[2] Superintendent of the Yeravda Central Prison

23. *LETTER TO NATHURAM TRIKAMDAS*

June 9, 1932

BHAI NATHURAM,

I felt happy on reading your detailed letter. I am glad that you have gone there to learn Khadi work. Learn it well and properly. If you get mere superficial knowledge, on your return you will not be able to teach it to others. You will be able to do that only if you acquire mastery over the smallest details. Observe the Ashram rules carefully.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

24. *LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR*

June 9, 1932

BHAI RAMESHWARDAS,

I got your letter. I had also received your previous letters. You must have received my replies. Repeating Ramanama certainly does not mean repeating it mechanically with the lips. The preceptor of Ramanama believes that if a person repeats it mechanically but with faith, his faith itself will some day carry the name below the throat and right down to the heart. So long as this has not happened, one cannot have true peace. I know of no other remedy which could give you peace. You should cut down your intake of food as a medical necessity at least, and if even then you do not keep well you should try fasting, etc. I wrote a postcard to Pyarelal only a few days ago.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 180

25. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

June 9, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

I got your two letters pinned together. I find that the short letter with paragraph headings is a summary of the first one and that it would be enough to read that alone. But it appears that you have also sent the original letter so that I may know more details if I wish.

You should certainly not strain your will to use the limb which pains, that is, use it disregarding the pain. If you feel that because of such self-restraint the pain is gradually decreasing, you may conclude nothing else is necessary If the pain does not decrease gradually even though you take care not to use that limb, there is no option but to take complete rest.

There can be no one rule for all as to the time required for a meal If somebody's meal consists only of milk, it would take him only five to seven minutes to sip it. If somebody else's meal consists only of one pomegranate and he has no teeth but has to eat the seeds instead of extracting the juice and drinking it, he may even take an hour to do so. Hence the following should be the rule: A meal should take up as much time as is required for chewing it properly, taking into consideration the type and quantity of the food. Ordinarily, twenty to thirty minutes should be regarded enough for those who have good teeth and who eat *rotlis*[1], dal, rice and vegetables. I have no faith in the common belief about sleeping with the head in a certain direction. I have never followed that rule.

It is my belief that the peepul tree is considered sacred because it is very big, covers a large area with shade and can be grown almost everywhere.

I understand what you say about the Hindi translation of my letters, etc. I shall be satisfied if everybody else is satisfied in this matter.

I used to keep cloves and sugar crystals in my mouth merely to prevent my voice getting hoarse. They were discontinued

[1] Chapatis

when I stopped making so many speeches and to such large audiences and I never resumed the practice afterwards.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7501. Also C.W. 4978. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

26. A LETTER

June 9, 1932

As you say, you are continually assailed by impure thoughts and feel miserable because of that. This is what is called self-made hell. This contains the replies to both your questions. It makes clear why I said what I did and also why such a state of mind is described as hell. If you understand the nature of this hell, it will also be easy for you to understand how you can come out of it. You should not brood over the fact that you get impure thoughts. Instead, you should go on as if they never troubled you. If a person who stumbles while walking does not stop to find out the cause of his stumbling, no harm will follow. If, on the contrary, such a person sits down on the road and goes on thinking why he stumbled, he will make no progress in his journey. But he will forget that he had stumbled if he does not think much about the fact and continues his journey. Since he is advancing, he gradually gathers strength and consequently stumbles less.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 211

27. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

June 10, 1932

Most of the manual work in the Ashram is done by the inmates themselves. There are a few hired labourers, but only those men who follow the Ashram rules fairly well have remained to work in that capacity and the inmates of the Ashram work with them. Gradually they are acquiring mastery over all types of work. Children also contribute their share.

Newcomers are first required to learn prayers, *bhajans*, etc. It is only after they have learnt these that those among them who wish to learn English may do so.

All the inmates spin for *yajna* in company for one hour. Yarn of less than twenty counts cannot be included as part of one's contribution through the spinning *yajna*. The yarn spun on a day has to be handed over to the depot on the same day. I have now suggested that, if all the people agree, no one should be permitted to buy the yarn spun by himself or herself for his or her own use[1] I have always believed that our *yajna* remains incomplete because of this freedom to buy one's own yarn.

Beginning last week, it has been decided to maintain an account of everybody's labour at the rate of one anna per hour of work, irrespective of the nature of work, though it has not been decided to make actual payments at this rate Just now my suggestion to Narandas was merely that, if he agreed, he should immediately start keeping the records. These records will be in addition to the general records which are being kept now, and for the present we will merely note the results They will give us much useful information and may also help us to realize the ideal of equality of work In other words, all types of social service, whether spinning or weaving or cleaning lavatories, should be valued at the rate of one anna per hour of work You probably remember that we have discussed this subject in the past at great length. Recently I have been writing to Narandas on a variety of subjects and among them I brought up this one again for discussion It seems to me that Narandas's capacity for responding to such ideas has increased considerably these days. He, therefore, welcomed my suggestion These records do not require much time to maintain and, if the present experiment reaches the stage of implementation, the keeping of accounts would be so easy that even a person of ordinary education in Gujarati would be able to do the work. Success in maintaining accounts of this nature depends on the honesty of the people If a person has not really worked for the number of hours which he enters against his name or supplies to the account-keeper, or if he has done the work carelessly, it is plain that the account will not be correct That is, it will be like good and bad coins getting mixed up I have been writing from here a great deal about children's education too. I cannot tell how much of it the inmates of the Ashram will be able to adopt It would require much time to discuss all that here, and I cannot spare it. Have patience in this matter.

All of us should make the right use, according to our lights, of this priceless opportunity which we have got. The best use we

[1] *Vide* p 8.

can make of it is to cultivate the power of reflection. Our minds are often vacant and at such times the only thing we like to do is either to read or to talk. Some of us do think, but they only build castles in the air. Really speaking, just as reading is an art so is thinking. All our thoughts should occur to us at the right time. Just as we do not read useless books, so also we should not let our minds run after idle thoughts. The power which is produced and conserved by such control over one's thoughts cannot be measured. I have felt during each term of imprisonment that it was the best time for learning to think in this manner.

I, therefore, advise all of you to master the art of deep reflection. If you do so, you will not find it necessary to consult me frequently. But let no one misunderstand my meaning. I do not wish to forbid anyone to consult me. I only wish to cure people of excessive dependence on me. In case of necessity, however, my advice will always be available. It is your right and also your duty to take whatever advantage you can of my experience and the results of my reflection concerning matters of which I have had more experience and over which I have reflected more deeply than others.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 211-3

28. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS PURUSHOTTAM*

June 11, 1932

CHI. MATHURADAS[1],

Why do you regard yourself responsible for Meghji's[2] death? If you are responsible, how much greater is my responsibility? But even supposing you are, why grieve over it now? One should not keep thinking about the past. After drawing the proper lesson from it, one should forget it.

It will be better to keep a fixed time every day for writing the book on weaving and not spend the whole day on it. What is written in haste often turns out to be ill-digested. If one's thoughts are perfectly clear, one always writes well and only such writing impresses.

[1] Mathuradas P. Asar, an expert carder and khadi worker of the Ashram

[2] One of the children in the Ashram who had died of smallpox; on Gandhiji's advice they had not been vaccinated.

I always prescribe the same medicine. For all diseases, though known by different names, have one and the same cause. Hence the medicine for all of them must be one.

I want you to become perfectly vigilant, build up strong health and start working regularly.

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 3754

29. LETTER TO NANABHAI I. MASHRUWALA

June 11, 1932

BHAI NANABHAI[1],

I got your postcard. I have not yet received Manilal's letter. I have completely stopped seeing visitors. Even if this had not been the case, Medh could not have seen me without special permission Nevertheless, when I receive Manilal's letter, I will form some opinion from it if I can From the fact that there has been no cable from Phœnix, I had concluded that Manilal and Sita[2] were quite well. About the latter, I came to know only from your postcard. I had heard from Surendra that he was well in Visapur

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 6684 Also C W 4329 Courtesy Kanubhai Mashruwala

30. LETTER TO NARAYAN M KHARE

[June 11, 1932][3]

CHI PANDITJI[4],

In the article on death Kaki's[5] name was included later, on my being reminded of her death by Mahadev As I had already drawn the moral from the other deaths described, I did not write more about her. A few other names of persons who had died were also left out. A complete list can be made only in the Ashram.

[1] Manilal Gandhi's father-in-law

[2] Manilal Gandhi's daughter Dhairyabala

[3] The source has "11-5-1932" which is a slip From the reference to the article on death (Vol XLIX, "Lesson of Death", 30-5-1932) it is evident that the letter was written later

[4] Music teacher at the Ashram

[5] Wife of D B Kalelkar

Rasik's[1] death could not be mentioned in that article, since he had died outside the Ashram. Why I mentioned Maganlal's is explained in the article itself. Mathuri[2] was all right when I saw her.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 230. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

31. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

June 11, 1932

CHI. JAMNA[3],

I am very glad that you have gone to Ranavav. Now you must not leave that place for quite some time. To whom does the sanatorium belong? Where is it situated? Are there any people living in the neighbourhood? Do you have to pay any rent? You should not feel sad at having had to go there. You should get acquainted with the poor living there. If possible, try and serve them. If that is not possible, study on your own and increase your knowledge and improve your ability to work. It is very good indeed that Purushottam[4] is with you.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 855. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

32. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

June 12, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I did not consider your letter too long, for you have given in it an account of your visits such as I had wanted you to give. I have been to Sinhagarh thrice. Once I went there while the Lokamanya was also there,[5] and we met each other a good many times. I saw his house. You have certainly described a few things about which I did not know. I did meet Hari Narayan Apte[6]. I certainly wish to read his novels, but I do not have the

[1] Harilal Gandhi's son who died in 1929

[2] Addressee's daughter

[3] Narandas Gandhi's wife

[4] Addressee's son

[5] *Vide* Vol. XVII, p. 366.

[6] A Marathi novelist

courage to take up anything new just now. Urdu, economics, watching the sky, spinning and writing letters—these keep me busy enough And off and on I take up something extra to read

What you say about the Superintendent[1] is correct. I saw and understood everything. But we should tolerate all that. As a man he is certainly not bad But authority is an evil thing. And, besides, authority over whom? We should, therefore, reason thus How good is it that even in unfavourable circumstances a little measure of humanity has survived? Who knows to what depths we would have descended if we were in his place? You will frequently get the kind of experiences you had It is through such experiences that we learn to cultivate forbearance, generosity, patience and courtesy In favourable circumstances, everyone can behave in a manner which will win him or her the good opinion of others

There was no special meaning behind my question, "Are you satisfied now?" I asked the question only casually Sushila may not have felt hurt, but I myself felt sorry. Having permitted her to come with you, I should have talked with her a little. But I had no time and so contented myself with an inquiry about Jamnadas My blessings to her

I certainly intended to write on the subject of sex. But it would be better if you ask me specific questions We need not stop the teaching of English All that I meant was that we should not teach it to new pupils before they have learnt the other things I have written more about this in my letter to Narandas.

Your body ought to be [as red] as copper. If you have no objection to fish and if you think you can maintain good health by taking it, you may go out to eat it.[2] Imam Saheb used to do that. If you wish to discuss this subject further with me, you may.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 10289 Also C W 6737 Courtesy. Premabehn Kantak

[1] Of the Yeravda Central Prison, Major Bhandari

[2] A physician had pointed out that she had been losing weight because she had given up fish

33. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

June 8/13, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I had got your postcard before I received the other post from you today, but I did not reply to it in a separate letter since I had written in detail about Narayanappa in the letter which was dispatched yesterday along with the other letters. I have now received a negative reply in regard to Mirabehn. It was good, therefore, that I had already decided provisionally not to see visitors. That being so, though Durga and Anandi[1] had come today to see us, Vallabhbhai and I could not see them. Mahadev went and saw them. We certainly felt unhappy but it is only by swallowing such bitter draughts that one can preserve dharma. I, therefore, welcomed the pain that I felt.

I am very happy that you have decided to follow the method of calculating the value of work at the rate of one anna per hour. I think we shall make some important discoveries by following it. In order that the account may be properly kept, everybody should know exactly how long one has worked. That means that you will have to strike the bell for each hour or will have to devise some other method so that everybody can know how much time has passed. Secondly, the information about the hours of work supplied by every inmate must be correct. If it is clearly realized that time is money, it will be seen that giving wrong information will be like passing off counterfeit coins. Our records will be wrong and, in consequence, our conclusions will be wrong too. I think for at least one month the slips received from everybody should be preserved. To facilitate this, I suppose all the inmates are supplied slips of the same size. The slips should be filled in in clear handwriting. Now that I think about the matter as I dictate these lines, I feel that you yourself need not keep a daily record. Your record will be the slips. If we decide to preserve them permanently, they can be pasted [in an account book] but I do not think that is necessary at all. As the slips are received, the hours mentioned in them may be entered in the ledger. If you object that, in that case, we would not know for

[1] Daughter of Lakshmidas Asar of the Sabarmati Ashram

how many hours each type of work was done, you may enter the hours under separate heads of work. However, to be able to use that information you will have to maintain a double-entry account, that is, keep the record under each name and each type of work separately. Only then will you be able to draw up quickly a summary every month showing the hours given by each person and the total number of hours spent on each type of work I do think that for our purpose information under both heads will be necessary. At the moment I cannot think of any other suggestions besides these Your account of your own daily work seems all right. If necessary, you may reduce *yajna* work from two hours to something less. If anybody gives money equal to the value of the yarn spun by him, instead of the yarn itself, his *yajna* is certainly imperfect, since it is marred by his desire to wear cloth woven from his own yarn That is, he spins yarn of fine count through his selfish desire to be able to wear cloth woven from such yarn Ideally, one should not wish at all to derive any personal benefit from work done for *yajna* or from any gift made as *yajna*. Anybody who works for *yajna* may take from what he produces only as much as would be the share of each if the total quantity were divided equally among all the persons for whom he works. We claim that we work for the 300 millions of our countrymen. If so, we may certainly have 1/300 millionth share of the yarn which we spin, imagining that that share is mixed with the yarn from which the cloth of our garments is woven I know that many arguments have been advanced, from the point of view of increasing the production of fine khadi, against my stand, and I admit the force of those arguments. That is why I have tolerated *yajna* which is only half pure. But I have always felt within myself that such *yajna* is imperfect If you clearly see the imperfection to which I am drawing attention, you should hand over all the yarn which you spin and overcome your desire to get cloth woven from it for your or Jamna's use. When all the yarn received is mixed together and woven into cloth, you may take from it what you require. If you see any error in my reasoning, please point it out to me. And you need not follow my suggestion though you may agree with me, if you feel that it is beyond your capacity at present to do so—irrespective of whether the reason is Jamna or yourself. If we voluntarily start doing something which we had not been doing up to now, we experience nothing but intense joy from that and feel that a heavy load has been taken off our head Do not act upon my suggestion till you feel thus. As I stated in a previous letter, I want every-

body's *yajna* to be perfect, but I should like to wait till all people are convinced of the correctness of my view I see from your letter, however, that they have now come so far that it should not be difficult to take the last step, if it is not implied in what they have agreed to I have interpreted your letter to mean that everybody would spin for *yajna* in the porch between 12.30 and 1.30 and hand over there and then the yarn spun by him or her. Literally understood, this means that one cannot even buy back that yarn. If this is to apply to all, you also will have to hand over the yarn spun by you. Your statement, however, that the yarn spun during that time will be handed over may also mean that a person may buy back his or her yarn for personal use. If so, the arrangement will have the imperfection which I have remarked above. I should be happy if all agree to remove this imperfection. If they agree, however, everybody should understand that he will have to spin in future even more carefully than he had been doing up to now when he knew that he was spinning the yarn for his own use.

I have been spinning for the last ten days or so with such bad slivers as I have never used before. I am doing this purposely. I wrote to Premlilabehn requesting her to send me some cotton, and in reply she immediately sent slivers. The slivers with which I have been spinning are from this lot. It certainly cannot be thrown away as useless. That would mean being light-hearted about work. Nor can I send these slivers to the women prisoners. If the slivers are good enough for them, I would say that they were twice so for me. I, therefore, decided to use them up. I realize from my experience the great difference between good slivers and bad slivers. Theoretically I always understood it, but I realized it from experience only now, for ordinarily I would always get good slivers. Whenever I myself have carded cotton I have done so very carefully. Hence I do not remember to have spun with such bad slivers any time in the past. And I see from Mahadev's spinning what difference good cotton can make.

My purpose in writing about all this is to point out that, if we wish to spin for *yajna* the finest yarn that we can, the slivers with which we spin should be of the best quality and the cotton must be perfectly clean. The spinning-wheel also should be in good condition. If these conditions are fulfilled, no one will find the one hour of spinning boring. On the contrary, the smoothly rotating spinning-wheels would make such sweet music when so many persons spin in complete silence that the hour would pass as but one minute and give perfect joy. Even the most interesting

activities will only bore a person who does not understand their value or who feels aversion towards them. Here ends my sermon on account-books and on *yajna*.

I have already said above that I will not see visitors now. Do not worry about my hand till I tell you that the condition is serious enough to cause worry, for I am keeping back nothing about it I see no necessity to keep back anything. We aspire to learn to bear everything that may happen to us. If so, it would be altogether wrong to keep back anything relating to illness or pain. The left elbow is in plaster just now. I, therefore, present a pitiful sight, though there is no reason at all to pity me. If the cause of the pain in the elbow is no other than the excessive work I have done with that arm, it is obvious that it should be given complete rest. Since the only way of doing that is to put it in plaster, that has been done. We shall know the effect in a week or two. If the elbow requires only rest, the officials themselves will obtain whatever external aid may be required. In other respects my health is very good. The weight is 106½ pounds, that is, it has been increasing. Though I can work only with one arm, and despite the trouble which bad slivers give, I can spin more than 200 rounds daily I can also read for a while. I practise, like a child, writing large Urdu letters in a copy-book. I would not be able to do all this if my health was not good. The mind would simply not work.

I think your decision regarding Jayantiprasad's daughter is perfectly all right. You should not assume new responsibilities just now. If the girl were capable of looking after herself and were healthy, I would have certainly felt tempted to take her in.

Chimanlal[1] should improve his health anyhow.

Leave Parnerkar[2] to solve his problem by himself. If he can stay, we certainly want him to do so. If he cannot, we need not press him. The verse in the *Gita* which asks what avails a man to force himself beyond a certain point applies in this case too.

The fact that you do not find Savitribehn's address there means, I suppose, that you have not been getting any letters from her recently But her connection with the Ashram is not recent. You may find some of her old letters lying somewhere. Moreover, if correspondents' addresses are being preserved in the Ashram, her address must have been written down somewhere. If anybody goes to the press, we are bound to have her address on its re-

[1] One of the oldest inmates of the Ashram, a patient of asthma

[2] Yashwant Mahadev Parnerkar, specialist in animal husbandry

cord. She has also written a book about me, in which she has reproduced some of my letters. You may possibly find her address in these. However, I do not want you to spend too much of your time in finding it.

Father Elwin has not explained why he suggested Friday for a Christian prayer. On Sunday evenings pious Christians will have gone to churches and will be attending special services, so that Sunday may not suit them for the purpose of the public communion which he has in view. Moreover, Friday is the day of Jesus's crucifixion, and Father Elwin may have selected it for that reason. But this is only my guess. I very much like the idea that we should fix one day in the week for a Muslim prayer. If Friday is not available now for that purpose, we may fix Thursday. Thursday means *Jummerat*, and I think that day also is holy for Muslims. To us, however, all days and hours are equally holy. It is enough if we pray with sincere devotion.

We also had read here in the papers about the suitcase. Hence Mahadev believes that we must have lost one. Aluvihari was with us all the time and was one of the party. It seems that, having read about the suitcase in the papers, he went and claimed it. Mahadev cannot guess and if he cannot, how can I?—whose clothes and books it contains. Well, it is safe now. Aluvihari will probably send it to you, or may use his judgment and do with it what seems best to him. I expect to hear from him.

I have always considered that the rule that newcomers should not be permitted to start immediately on English is a correct one. My stand is that they may learn English, must learn it, but only after they have acquired a working knowledge of Sanskrit, Hindi and the Urdu script, learnt music well enough to join in singing *bhajans* and mastered all the processes relating to spinning. I think a person of average ability would take one year to complete this programme, though it is likely that some may take more than that and some less. Those who have joined the Ashram for life or have joined it temporarily with the aim of training themselves for service should have no special attraction for English. If anybody feels it, he should know that he cannot satisfy his desire in the Ashram. Nobody should understand from this that we proscribe English from the Ashram or do not love it as much as others do. Our only aim is to see that it does not occupy a place which does not belong to it. For many persons knowledge of English is essential even for the purpose of service, but we can give instruction in it in the Ashram only in a man-

ner convenient to the Ashram and consistent with its aims. We are entitled to expect this patience in all inmates of the Ashram.

June 11, 1932

Regarding Imam Saheb's tomb, Pyare Ali asked Khatib Saheb for his opinion. The latter said that Islam does not approve of the erection of tombs. You should, therefore, put a few blocks of stones on the spot to mark it off and to prevent the ground being used for any purpose. Take or send some Muslim to the place and ask him to arrange a few stones. If there is no objection to our laying them, somebody from among ourselves may arrange them.

Silence Day, June 13, 1932

I got your letter today. Since tomorrow (Tuesday) is a holiday, I will dispatch the post today. Read the letter which I have written to Sitala Sahay[1]. However, in the end do what you think proper. I think it is best that in this matter I should not decide from here what should be done. I will approve of whatever you do I may not even have the necessary data for taking a correct decision.

Where is Madhavlal at present? I thought he was in jail. But I hear from Vithal that he is not in jail.

I am not sending any article this week. I have no time to write one, and, moreover, this letter to you has become something like an article.

The plaster on the left arm has been removed. There has been no improvement. The cause of the pain, therefore, must be something else. But there is no cause whatever for worry. Mirabehn is on saltless diet at present, and, therefore, had been pressing me to adopt it. I started it yesterday. For me it is child's play to live on such diet, for I have done that for eight years. I shall have fresh experience of it now. If there is anything to write about, I will do so before the next letter is due.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U /I Also C W 8232. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] A khadi worker from U P.

31. LETTER TO BHARATI

June 13, 1932

I got your letter[1] written in beautiful handwriting. I cannot have too many such letters.

I would certainly be pleased if you brothers and sisters became as strong and sturdy as steel and could endure heat and cold. But I cannot all at once make such an experiment on you in the heat [*sic*] of Simla. Training in such endurance would be fruitful only if it is undergone methodically and step by step. It is a grave error to believe that a person who generally lives a sheltered life can suddenly become hardened when the need arises. That would be going against nature. I remember hundreds of instances of persons who made such mistakes.

I would certainly enjoy reading literature. During my school days I could not read anything outside the syllabus. After that I got involved in so many activities one after another that I could get little time to read. Whatever I did read was in jails. But I do not think that I have lost much because of this. I got a great deal of time for thinking. And, moreover, what one learns in the school of experience is always more useful than reading.

Even those who profess to cultivate art for its own sake are not really able to do so. Art has a place in life though what is art is a different question. But, art and such other things are mere means in the path that we wish to tread. When they become ends in themselves they become shackles and drag us down.

God is Truth. For the past few years I have been saying that 'Truth is God' instead of saying that 'God is Truth'. I feel that this is a more logical way of putting it. Truth is the only reality in this world.

Here Truth should be given a wider connotation. It is something living. This Truth that is God and the laws of God are not distinct from one another but are the same thing. Hence Truth, too, is a living thing. Thus it means the same thing to say that this world is governed by Truth or by God's laws. There is

[1] The addressee had asked Gandhiji whether he was interested in literature, whether art could be pursued for its own sake and what his concept of God was.

infinite power in that Truth. According to Chapter X of the *Gita*, it may be said that the world is sustained by just a fraction of that power. You will, therefore, understand what I mean by God if you read "Truth" wherever the word "God" occurs.

If God exists—though we call Him Truth—it is our duty to worship Him. We become like that which we worship. Prayer means nothing more than this. But does not that meaning of prayer explain everything? Truth dwells in our hearts, but we are not aware, or fully aware of the fact. This awareness comes through sincere prayer . . .[1]

Do you find it difficult to read my handwriting? The envelope in which this letter is sealed was made by Sardar. He spends a great deal of his time in putting to this use any useless paper he can lay his hands on.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp 214-5

35. LETTER TO MAITRI GIRI

June 14, 1932

CHI. MAITRI[2],

I got your letter. There was no reason whatsoever for you to feel hurt The question which I asked you, I put to all grown-up girls If any girl wishes to get married, I regard that as natural Would it not be better to tell me frankly rather than repine inwardly? But I am certainly pleased if a girl does not wish to get married. I asked you so that you may have no fear on that account If, however, you positively do not, at present, wish to get married, that is indeed the best. You should know, however, that in order to preserve such purity, it is very necessary to cultivate devotion to God and to keep oneself engaged in some work for the service of people. All of you should improve your health. How is Krishnamaiyadevi's[3] health?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 6236

[1] Omission as in the source
[2] Daughter of Dalbahadur Giri
[3] Widow of Dalbahadur Giri

36. LETTER TO SHAMAL R. RAVAL

June 14, 1932

CHI. SHAMAL[1],

I got your letter. However much your brother or others may press you, you should cling to your decision, and refuse to get married as long as you can control your mind. You may request Anasuyabehn[2] to help you in this matter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N 3141 Also C.W 2877. Courtesy: Shamal R Raval

37. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

June 14, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

After I had dispatched the post yesterday, I got a letter from Mahavir[3] in which he says that he has not received the money. He has estimated the expenditure at Rs. 15 per head. You may decide what it should be. Maitri informs me that she has not the slightest wish to marry just now.

Personally, I think we should let them stay in Darjeeling as long as they wish.

BAPU

CHI. NARANDAS GANDHI
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C. W. 8233. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] A worker in the Navajivan Press

[2] Sister of Ambalal Sarabhai, a mill-owner of Ahmedabad. She was associated with the Labour Union of Ahmedabad.

[3] Son of Krishnamaiyadevi

38. LETTER TO TARAMATI M. TRIKUMJI[1]

June 14, 1932

I have had to stop seeing other visitors as I was not permitted to see Mirabehn. I will let you know immediately when I start seeing visitors again.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p 109

39. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

June 15, 1932

DEAR AGATHA[2],

I have your letter You are quite right in scrupulously honouring the restrictions. Indeed by a long course of habit I have lost all curiosity. For a prisoner's curiosity can only be idle, as he can do nothing even if he came to know certain things through indirect or illegitimate means. And what is perhaps more, I have abundant faith in friends doing their very best so long as they believe in the justice of the cause.

Yes, Mahadev was able to see both his wife and son only last week. He is entitled to a visit per month.

Love from us both.

BAPU

From a photostat G N 1454

40. LETTER TO BHAU PANSE

June 15, 1932

CHI. BHAU,

I could not reply to your letter of the 6th last week. Meanwhile, I got another letter from you this week. I understand your reason for discontinuing to send Vinoba's discourses. His prohibition is right.

[1] Wife of Mathuradas Trikumji

[2] Secretary of the India Conciliation Group (1931)

Yes, there was some misunderstanding on my part regarding the paintings of scenes from the *Ramayana*. I do not see anything objectionable in meditating over a figure drawn as purely imaginary. If, however, meditating on the *Gita* can satisfy you, where is the need for any other object of meditation? There are two ways of meditating on the *Gita*. Since we look upon the *Gita* as Mother, you may meditate on a painting or photograph of your mother, if you require one (and if your mother is dead), thinking of her as the *kamadhenu*[1] in the form of the *Gita*. Alternatively, you may have an imaginary picture of the *Gita* in your mind. You may even think of her as Mother Cow. I think it would be better if you could follow the second way. You may, at that time, meditate on any verse or phrase from the chapter of the *Gita* which you may have recited on that day or from any other chapter. All the words in the *Gita* are so many ornaments on the body of Mother *Gita* and, therefore, meditating on any one of them amounts to meditating on the *Gita* herself, just as meditating on an ornament worn by the woman whom one loves amounts to meditating on herself. But one may also meditate on the *Gita* in any other way that one can think of. There are as many ways as there are brains. No two persons meditate in the same way even on one and the same object. There will always be some difference between the exact pictures of the object imagined by them and their descriptions of it.

According to Chapter VI, even the least *sadhana* is not wasted, and we resume our *sadhana* in our next life from the point where we had stopped. Similarly, a person who desires to turn towards spiritual living but lacks the necessary strength for the purpose will have greater strength of mind in his next life. I have no doubt about this at all in my mind, but it does not mean that we can relax our effort in this life. If we think in that manner, our desire for a spiritual living is not sincere. Or, it is a desire of the intellect and not of the heart, and a desire of the intellect has no value at all. It will not survive one's death. On the other hand, a desire which has been accepted by the heart cannot but inspire sincere effort to fulfil it, though it is quite possible that owing to various circumstances or weakness of the body our desire may not be fulfilled during this life. We have experience of this every day. But the desire will cling to the soul when it leaves the body, and in the next life the difficulties which stood in the way of its fulfilment during this life will diminish and the

[1] Mythical cow that yielded whatever one asked for

desire will be fulfilled or will at least become stronger. Thus a person who aspires after spiritual life is ever advancing

It may be that Jnaneshwar Maharaj meditated on Nivrittinath[1] while the latter was alive, but I am strongly of the view that we should not follow his example If we meditate on a person, he must have attained perfection It is altogether improper, and also unnecessary, to ascribe perfection to a living human being. It is possible, however, that Jnaneshwar Maharaj did not meditate on the real Nivrittinath, but meditated on the perfect Nivrittinath of his imagination. But why should we need at all concern ourselves with this problem? When the question is about the propriety of meditating on a living human being, we need not bring in the question of meditating on our mental image of that person and any reply on the propriety of that is likely to confuse the reason of the other person.

The names which are given in Chapter I are, according to me, more the names of certain qualities than of real persons. While describing the divine and the demoniac forces in our nature, the poet has personified them In saying this, I do not deny the possibility of an actual battle between Kauravas and Pandavas having taken place near Hastinapur. My belief is that the poet took a well-known event of that age as an example and used it as material for his immortal work. I may be mistaken in this belief and all those names may be the names of real persons. If so, it was not improper for the poet to give those names at the commencement of his historical narrative, and, since the first chapter is necessary for introducing the subject, it is necessary to recite it as part of ceremonial recitation of the *Gita*.

If we spin with slivers made by somebody else, our spinning *yajna* is certainly imperfect. A person like me may not be able to make his own slivers at present owing to physical weakness, but those who can should make their own slivers

I consider it necessary for everybody to learn spinning on the *takli* and gain mastery over it. I know that Vinoba regards it as a much easier means for the *yajna* of spinning. I have not come to a final decision about this, nor do I wish to do so without discussing the matter at length with Vinoba. I am, therefore, not particular either way. You should, however, discuss your suggestion with Narandas. I also will do so.

BAPU

[1] Jnaneshwar's elder brother, a *jnanayogi*

[PS.]

Write to me about your constipation.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6731. Also C.W. 1471. Courtesy: Bhau Panse

41. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

June 15, 1932

CHI. MANU[1],

I got your letter. I cannot understand why you did not get the letter that was sent with my letter to Jamnadas[2]. Your courage is being tested fairly well. But there is nothing to be afraid of. You should tell very plainly that you have been living with Ba and Bali since childhood, and that you do not wish to live with Harilal at all. Even parents cannot claim custody of grown-up children. Hence it depends on your own wish where you will live. Nobody can force you to marry against your will. You should, therefore, always remember that it is in your own power to save yourself. I can write in this way and give you courage, but as prisoner I cannot give anything in newspapers. Nor will my letters help you in the court. But rest assured that you will need no such help.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1514. Courtesy: Manubehn Mashruwala

42. A LETTER

June 15, 1932

Like you, some others also believe that I live a life of self-control and observe *brahmacharya*, and that, therefore, I was sure to live long. This belief about me is not correct, or it is correct only partially in contrast with how other people live. I indulged in sexual pleasure nearly up to the age of 30. Nor can I claim that I exercised self-control in eating. I used to eat all

[1] Daughter of Harilal Gandhi

[2] Jamnadas Gandhi, younger brother of Maganlal Gandhi and Principal of Rajkot Rashtriya Shala

kinds of delicacies for the mere pleasure of the palate. Then I steadily drifted towards restraint. But this does not mean at all that I have overcome the cravings of the senses. All I can claim is that I have learnt to hold them under control. Thus, self-indulgence had already had its effect on my body, but it has been counteracted in the measure that I have acquired self-control. My contemporaries who do not exercise even that much self-control naturally wonder at my self-control such as it is and do not observe my weaknesses. . . .[1]

The privileges which I enjoy as a prisoner are not because of my being placed in a particular class. I am not treated as an ordinary convict. Prisoners of my category[2] are entitled to many privileges. This, of course, is no defence of what I do. Though the Government does give certain privileges to a prisoner like me, it certainly depends on the prisoner himself whether or not to avail himself of those privileges. Hence the misunderstanding which you mention is quite natural. But I regard it in public interest to continue to avail myself of the privileges even at the risk of incurring such a misunderstanding. But it should not be necessary for me to defend this point of view. Its correctness should be self-evident. Even if it is not, I should cling to it so long as I believe it to be earnest This reasoning applies to every captain of a ship A captain cannot always explain the reasons for the course which he is following. But he would not deserve to be a captain if he listens to the advice of others and gives up what he believes to be the right course. Such captains are known to have wrecked on rocks the ships under their charge. Hence persons like you may certainly caution me whenever they have doubts about the propriety of my actions. If, however, I do not change my policy even after that, they should have faith that what I am doing is right. It does happen sometimes that such faith proves to be misplaced. But there is no other way of managing public affairs. At the moment I am confident that, when I feel that I ought not to avail myself of a particular privilege or of any of them, I shall have the strength to renounce it or them. In South Africa I spent fairly long periods of imprisonment as an ordinary prisoner.

From whom did you hear that story about Krishnadas[3]? There is no truth in it at all. Krishnadas was certainly not sent

[1] Here follows Mahadev Desai's comment introducing the next paragraph but does not indicate if any portion is omitted here.

[2] State prisoners detained under Regulation 25 of 1829

[3] Gandhiji's secretary in 1921-22

away. For some reasons he himself asked for leave to go. But though he has left, our relations have remained the same. It is against my nature to take any such step at somebody's instigation. And nobody instigated me to take such a step in regard to Krishnadas. All the same I wish to know the source of this story. If you think you can tell me, please let me know.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 218-20

13. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

[Before *June 16, 1932*][1]

CHI. PARASRAM,

Judging from your letter the children seem to have made good progress. Your speed with the *takli* is also good. Do give half an hour daily to it; if you can in that time spin 160 rounds, nothing can be better than that. What does *kule ki haddi*[2] mean? The word *kula* is not to be found in the Hindi dictionary. Why did the *haddi* get swollen? Has the swelling subsided now? If it has not, you must take immediate steps to cure it.

The replies to the questions which you have put to Mahadev are:

1. I consider a minimum of half an hour's walk morning and evening essential for you and others. It is not necessary to sit in one position for more than an hour. One should stand up for a minute at least, or change the posture.

2. It is natural that a mother should desire to see her son, but every mother ought to restrain such a wish and, if the son is engaged in some activity of service, he must cure his mother of such attachment.

3. When a son goes abroad and lives in a foreign country for ten years, his mother has no choice but to bear the separation. There are innumerable poor mothers in India who possibly never again see the face of their son after he has gone out to earn a living. One may console the mother through a letter, and cheer her as much as one can by reasoning with her and citing other similar instances.

[1] The date is inferred from the reference to the swelling of the hip-bone; *vide* "Letter to Parasram Mehrotra", pp. 48-9.

[2] Hip-bone

4. At the moment my heart has become as hard as stone so that the incidents in Bombay may have affected me, if at all, only unconsciously, and I am not aware that they have. I felt sad for a while but I think I have quietened down after that.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 7481 Also C W 4956 Courtesy Parasram Mehrotra

44. LETTER TO C F. ANDREWS

June 16, 1932

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letter and your scribble under Agatha's letter. I am following your movement in so far as it is reported in the papers here, but even without the assistance of the papers I can picture to myself what you are doing.[1] I do hope that your Chinese mission[2] will be successful Do please send our love to the good Dean of Canterbury when you write to him I wonder how long he is going to be there. Has he any companion with him? How is it we have not yet got your latest book[3]? I see that the first edition was sold outright.

Love from us all.

MOHAN

From a photostat· G N. 974

[1] The addressee was trying for reconciliation between the Congress leaders and the British Government by personally interviewing Lord Irwin, Lord Sankey, Sir Samuel Hoare and Ramsay MacDonald

[2] To the flood-stricken areas of China in company with the Dean of Canterbury

[3] *What I Owe to Christ*

45. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

Unrevised *June 16, 1932*

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter[1] came in only today.

I am glad you have left Damodardas's roof. It is ominous that there is no letter from him as yet. Let us hope that he will do nothing shady and that [he] has done nothing of the kind. I have always held a high opinion of him. It will distress me to find otherwise.

I have no doubt you will make sure that Shantabai is not embarrassed in any way by harbouring you.

Yes, I have been saltless since Sunday. As the doctors removed the splints and found that there was no relief from their use, I immediately thought of you and knew that you would be more at ease if I gave up salt. It was no deprivation to me and so I stopped it at once. It meant giving up the loaf and going to chapati. Whether it was the chapati or the absence of salt, the bowels became looser than I would care. Therefore from yesterday I have been on grapes, mangoes and a vegetable. This at once put the bowels right, though not absolutely. I would, therefore, continue the chapatiless and almondless diet for a little longer and watch the result. I was weighed yesterday and had lost 1½ lb.,

[1] Dated June 11, 1932, in which she had written, "Now as to the Government's reply to you regarding my activities . . . (*Fancy me directing the movement* — I had a good laugh when I heard of my importance.) But I must now tell you just what I was doing, as there may have been things which made them suspicious. My time was fully occupied with the work you had left to me but in the process of compiling my reports, etc., for each week, I naturally mixed freely with my friends, many of whom were taking an active part in the directing of the movement. On one occasion I do remember writing a letter to the then Acting President of the Congress for a friend who did not happen to know him personally. And people would sometimes consult me regarding the application of your principles of Truth and Non-violence. But as for directing the movement, I do not even know the names of the various "War Councils" let alone have contact with them. Since my release on May 15 . . . I have again been absorbed in the work you instructed me to do. So there we are—and, as you say, we may rejoice in His will." Gandhiji forwarded this to E. E. Doyle on June 18, 1932.

nothing to grumble about. Strength is maintained. The condition of saltless ought not to mean reversion to milk. If I revert to milk and the pain in the elbow disappears, the disappearance will justly be attributed to milk. If in spite of milk, the pain does not leave the elbow and does after giving up salt, the experiment may be claimed to have succeeded. Dr. Mehta is positive that there is nothing organically wrong and that the only thing required is rest for the affected part. This I am giving so far as the wheel is concerned. Anyway, having taken up the saltless, I shall watch its other effects and take to milk if need be. I am watching myself carefully. There is, therefore, not the slightest cause for anxiety. The system is quite good in every other respect. As Vallabhbhai rightly says, if there was anything organically wrong, the mischief should spread to the other parts of the body. I am not repeating all these details in my letter to the Ashram, since you let them see what I write to you.

I understand what you say about your activity. I shall see if I can make use of the information.

I suppose you know that Devdas is down with fever. The telegram received says there is nothing serious. I have wired for more particulars. And Manilal, Sushila, their daughter and Pragji were all down with that deadly malaria. But they seem to have escaped with extreme weakness. There is a splendid passage in Sir James Jeans' book "Life is a progress towards Death." Another reading may be: Life is a preparation for Death! And somehow or other we quail to think of that inevitable and grand event. It is grand even regarded as a preparation for a better life than the past, as it should be for everyone who tries to live in the fear of God.

Remember me to Shantabai. Of course, you will be seeing Damodardas often and help him with your advice Is Keshav[1] there? What does he say? Ask him to write to me fully.

Love from us all.

BAPU

[PS.]

In the envelope you will admire Vallabhbhai's art.

From the original. C W. 6225. Courtesy Mirabehn Also G N 9691

[1] Son of Maganlal Gandhi

16. LETTER TO NARAYANAPPA

June 16, 1932

There is nothing like finding one's full satisfaction from one's daily task however humble it may be. To those that wait and watch and pray, God always brings greater tasks and responsibilities.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 243

17. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

June 16, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

I have not yet received your booklet. Mahadev will go through the Press cutting. Do something about the swelling[1] and cure it.

You did quite right in not running up to Vimal's[2] elder brother, but you yourself should feel so. The knowledge that he is under the care of your brother and that the latter is looking after him properly should be enough for you. If you have some special remedy for his illness or if you think that your very presence will cure him, then it may be your duty to go. That is, if you can become free from your work you should go in such circumstances. You should go, however, not only for the sake of Vimal's brother but for any person who may be ill and whose illness is likely to be cured by your presence. It is only thus that one learns to overcome the weakness of one's heart. Let us hope that the child is all right now.

I think that it would be desirable to fix the maximum number of hours for work, if that is possible. But it seems to me that the limit would be different for each person. In an institution in which all the members regard one another as members of a family and everybody has the same sense of responsibility, it would not only be impossible, but may even be improper to fix a uniform limit for all. How can we frame a rule which would

[1] *Vide* p. 44.

[2] Addressee's son

not permit a person, whose health is good enough, who is himself willing and who has no other work of service to claim his time, to give all his time to the service of the institution? The conclusion which I draw from this is that, if we exercise discretion in all our work, do it calmly and selflessly and without hurry, no one would feel the burden of work. We feel work to be a burden only when we do it under compulsion. Work done willingly and cheerfully is never felt as a burden. But those who have a demoniac nature are impelled by their selfishness to take all manner of work from their body and then break down. Such persons have no peace of mind and we should never take them as examples

The line about women which you have quoted has no other sense but what I have explained.[1] It is true only for lustful men. There is no injustice in saying that for immoral men, women are a mine of evil, just as for the greedy, a mine of gold is like hell. For the world, however, it is not so. Gold is useful in many ways.

BAPU

[PS.]

I was glad to hear that the child was all right.[2]

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 7502 Also C W 4979 Courtesy Parasram Mehrotra

48 *LETTER TO VITHALDAS JERAJANI*

June 16, 1932

BHAISHRI VITHALDAS,

I got your two letters. The X-rays seem to have had a miraculous effect on you Your health should improve rapidly now. But it may be wrong to believe that, because the rays have proved beneficial in one disease, they would help in my complaint too. They may or may not. Here in the prison my body is in the hands of the Superintendent Let him take such measures as he thinks may help They seem to have no fear and believe that the pain in the elbow will disappear if it is given complete rest.

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Parasram Mehrotra", pp 2-3

[2] This was followed by a note from Mahadev Desai "I have gone through your article on the *takli* and found nothing special about it, on the contrary you have omitted to discuss its economic aspect We should prepare an interesting dialogue on this subject for children."

The pain is not continuous. The elbow pains only when I do a particular type of work with the arm.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9782

49. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

June 16, 1932

CHI. DEVDAS,

I did fear some such thing. I had a feeling the day before yesterday that there would be bad news from somewhere. And then I got your wire yesterday. I immediately asked Vallabhbhai what the wire contained, and on opening it he read the news about your illness. It was not likely that you would escape fever in Gorakhpur. But I assume that it will have left you before you get this letter. I think that, according to your nature, you would like to be surrounded by friends and relations at such a time. You would deserve such care because you have looked after many people in their illness. But I myself am a hard-hearted man. I, therefore, would not like to ask anybody from the western part to run up to Gorakhpur. And if I did feel such a wish, I would suppress it. If I don't practise my philosophy on you, on whom else should I? I wish that you should understand this nature of mine and bear it cheerfully. God is your relations and your friends and your parents; all others are so only in name. Themselves helpless creatures, how can they help you? Instead of looking to such cyphers for protection and support, seek the protection of the Universal Power. He will send you such help as He wills. It is my firm faith that, wherever you are, you will draw your neighbours towards you. There is no reason to believe that it will be otherwise in jail.

After saying this, I suggest that, if you want anybody from the Ashram to be near you, send a wire there. But my hope is that by the time you get this letter your illness will have been a thing of the past. You always have the blessings of us all.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 220

[1] Gandhiji, however, was persuaded by Vallabhbhai Patel to request the U.P. Governor for the addressee's transfer to a jail having less inclement climate. *Vide* "Telegram to Sir Malcolm Hailey", p. 57.

50. A LETTER[1]

June 16, 1932

The story about the snake is correct only to a certain extent. The snake was passing over my body. At such a moment what could I or anyone else do except to remain still? I don't see that this deserves any such praise as the writer has given me. And how do we know if the snake was poisonous or not? Having held for years that death is not a frightening event I am not affected for long by the death of anyone.

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 224

51. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

June 17, 1932

MY DEAR AMTUL,

I have your letter. I am glad you are staying with your people I have not yet been able to write to Dr Sharma[2]. But I will do so early.[3] If the door to interviews is again opened, you shall certainly come and see me. Are you reading anything? Give me your day's diary. Do write something always in Urdu.

Love.

BAPU

SHRIMATI AMTUL SALAAM
42 GHOD BUNDER ROAD
SANTA CRUZ
B. B. & C. I. RLY.

From a photostat G N 251

[1] The letter was in reply to a question whether the story about Gandhiji having allowed a venomous snake to crawl over his body was true

[2] Dr Hiralal Sharma, a practising naturopath

[3] *Vide* p 67

72. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

June 17, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

What else am I to believe but that you are a fool? If children have no interest in asking questions and still write, they waste their time. If they write with interest, though merely as a formality, there is some meaning in that. Children may not expect letters from parents, but are bound to be glad when they get one. There will be no trace of selfishness in this. In any case, you cannot see in this evidence of hysteria. I have explained to you in one of my letters what your hysteria is.[1]

I have not opposed contemplation of a personal form at the time of prayers, but have given a higher place to the formless. Perhaps it is not right to make such a distinction. What suits one person will not suit another. Comparison is out of place in this matter. For me worship of the formless has greater appeal. Your explanation regarding Sankara and Ramanuja does not seem correct.[2] Personal experience is more important than the influence of external circumstances. The latter should have no effect on a votary of truth. He ought to see beyond them. We often see that opinions formed on the basis of external circumstances are afterwards discovered to be wrong. The connection between the *atman*[3] and the body is a well-known instance of this. Because the *atman* is intimately connected with the body in this life, we cannot easily think of it as distinct from the body. No one has equalled the power of vision of the person who saw beyond this outward fact and first uttered: "Not this". You will be able to think of any number

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLIX, pp. 261-3 and 325-7.

[2] According to *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, pp. 168-70, the addressee had argued that our attitude towards God had changed with the change in social and political conditions. Sankara lived in an age of freedom when people talked of equality with God; Ramanuja lived in an age of slavery when people talked of being the slaves of the slaves of God. In the book *Bapuna Patro-5: Ku. Premabehn Kantakne*, pp. 99-101, however, the addressee, presumably relying on her memory, says that she had argued that both Sankara and Ramanuja could attain greater heights of spirituality because they lived in an age of freedom whereas the later saints, being born in slavery, worshipped personal gods and not the abstract Brahman.

[3] Self

of such instances. It is not at all proper to take literally the utterances of Tukaram and other saints. Recently I read one such utterance of Tukaram. I quote it for your benefit.

> An image of Lord Pashupati is made out of clay what, then, would clay be called?
>
> The worship of the Lord reaches unto Him, the clay remains clay.
>
> An image of Vishnu is carved out of stone, yet the stone does not become Vishnu
>
> The devotion is offered to Vishnu, the stone remains a stone

From this, I draw the lesson that we should pay attention only to the idea behind the words of such saints. They may describe personal God and yet worship the formless We ordinary human beings cannot do that and, therefore, we would come to grief if we do not try to understand their real meaning and guide ourselves by it

If a person who can read Urdu goes to Imam Saheb's house, he will soon find the books. You have there Mirabehn's Urdu-English and English-Urdu dictionary. Send that, too, along with the other books. Does anyone clean Imam Saheb's house periodically? Every unoccupied house should be cleaned once a week or a fortnight.

You will find it difficult to keep an account of time only till it has become a habit with you to do so Afterwards, it shouldn't take any time. Such things have a value and bear fruit only if they are done in the right spirit.

I cite the example of children in South Africa in order to encourage the children in the Ashram and not to find fault with them. These children, too, are capable of working, if we have anyone among us who knows how to take work from them. Aren't you there?

For the pain in your back, you should sit in warm water. You should do that for fifteen to twenty minutes. At the same time you should massage the back with your palm. If you do this, your pain will be cured and there will also be a beneficial effect on menstruation Let me know what the doctor says. Such diseases should be effectively treated at the very first appearance of their symptoms.

I carefully examined your daily programme of work. It is much too heavy. You can easily make a few cuts in it. From 12 30 to 5 40 you run a class and give instruction in crafts. That comes to five hours and ten minutes. If you reduce this period by one hour, you will get the free time which you need. You

may retire into privacy and have a nap or simply lie down for one hour, or do some work which makes you feel that you are resting. You should not, however, spend the time in talking or in any serious work. If you do not wish to utilize the free hour just then, you may advance the time of those items of the programme for which it is convenient to do so and get an hour in the evening. Anyone who feels completely absorbed in his or her work does not feel it a burden or a strain, but to one who feels no interest in his work even a small task seems heavy, as a day seems as long as a year to a prisoner. To a person given to worldly enjoyments, a year seems as short as a day!

In the past, I used to get bored when listening to European music. It is only now that I can understand and enjoy it a little.

You are not right when you say that "one should not hope to do any reading here". It is quite true that you cannot do much reading. It is equally true that reading is given less importance in the Ashram. Even so, many persons in the Ashram have been able to do some reading. I do not like your expressions of despair. Try to perfect what you find imperfect. If, however, on the balance you feel that things are unsatisfactory, if, that is, after weighing the good points against the shortcomings, you feel that the latter exceed, you should leave the Ashram. Justice to oneself and to society requires that.

You need not apologize for your long letters. They don't bore me; on the contrary, I like them. I learn something from them, for each of them mirrors the state of your heart at the time of writing it.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10290. Also C.W. 6738. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

53. LETTER TO MOHAN N. PARIKH

June 17, 1932

CHI. MOHAN[1],

Your letter was well written. Try to write still more neatly. I am glad that you do cleaning work and carding.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9180

[1] Son of Narahari Parikh

54. A LETTER

June 17, 1932

You ought not to lose your self-confidence. One often gets impure thoughts. But those who frequently clean out the dust that daily settles in their houses may be said to be clean and keeping their houses clean. Similarly, those who drive out impure thoughts from their minds as soon as they come are sure to win in their struggle. They should not be called hypocrites. To save oneself from hypocrisy, I have already suggested a golden rule, which is that one should speak about one's impure thoughts and never hide them. Of course, you need not trumpet them in public. But you should certainly tell some friend about them. And, indeed, you should be mentally prepared not to mind even if the whole world knew about them. Have faith in the words of Vinoba and do not yield to despair.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 226

55. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI[1]

June 17, 1932

I, for one, daily realize this truth from experience, that Nature provides for the needs of every living creature from moment to moment, and I also see that, voluntarily or involuntarily, knowingly or unknowingly, we violate this great law every moment of our lives. All of us can see that, in consequence of our doing so, on the one hand large numbers suffer through over-indulgence and, on the other, countless people suffer through want. Our endeavour, therefore, is to save mankind from the calamity of widespread starvation on the one hand and, on the other, destruction of food-grains by the American millionaires through a false understanding of economic laws. It is true, of course, that it is impossible at

[1] The addressee had requested Gandhiji to explain to him the meaning of the vow of non-possession

present to live in perfect conformity with this natural law. But that need not worry us.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 224

56. A LETTER[1]

June 17, 1932

Nothing as regards the conduct of prisoners can be sent from here for publication. As you say clarification on this point is desirable but that must await a suitable opportunity. I appreciate your argument against fetters. However I still think that the distinction between ordinary and political prisoners is invalid. There is need for reform in the administration of prisons. A prison should be a house of correction and not punishment. If that is so, why should a forger have fetters on his legs in prison? The fetters will not improve his character. To my mind it is intolerable that anyone should be fettered if there is no likelihood of his trying to escape or becoming unmanageable or wishing to make a nuisance of himself. But if a political prisoner is an athlete like you, always thinking out means of escape and unable to control his tongue and hands, it will be the duty of the authorities to put him in fetters. In short what I mean is that the discrimination between political and other prisoners is not justified. We reformers should not seek for any concessions which cannot be justified on ethical grounds and are not granted to all prisoners in the same category. I should be unable to stand an arrangement by which wheat is given to politicals and maize to ordinary prisoners. Wheat bread must be issued to a prisoner who is unable to digest maize even if he is a murderer. And a political prisoner who has splendid digestion must give up wheat and ask for maize, and thus protect his fellow-prisoners. But these are only my views upon which I must not insist from where I am. Let each follow the dictates of his own conscience.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 226-7

[1] The addressee had suggested satyagraha against political prisoners being taken out of jail for work, chained and fettered.

57. TELEGRAM TO SIR MALCOLM HAILEY[1]

HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR
UNITED PROVINCES

June 18, 1932

OVER THREE MONTHS AGO MY SON DEVDAS WAS TRIED DELHI AND MEERUT AS CIVIL RESISTER AND SOMETIME AFTER CONVICTION TRANSFERRED GORAKHPUR JAIL GORAKHPUR CLIMATE NOTORIOUSLY MALARIAL CAUSE FOR REMOVAL COMPANIONLESS TO SUCH OUT OF THE WAY JAIL UNKNOWN HE IS SUFFERING FROM SIXTH INSTANT FROM SUSPECTED MILD ENTERIC THOUGH HE SEEMS TO BE RECOVERING REQUEST HIS REMOVAL TO HEALTHIER AND MORE ACCESSIBLE PLACE PREFERABLY TO DEHRADUN TO JOIN PANDIT JAWAHARLAL WITH WHOM HE IS CLOSE FRIENDS OR TO YERAVDA TO JOIN ME IF REMOVAL HERE AT ALL POSSIBLE.

M. K. GANDHI
PRISONER, YERAVDA CENTRAL PRISON

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800 (40)(3), Pt I, p 283

[1] *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol I, p 174, has "A wire from Devdas was received yesterday 'The maximum temperature was 102°, and has now gone below 100° The climate of Gorakhpur is very bad . .' Bapu remarked that Devdas had referred to the climate in the expectation that we should try to get him transferred from Gorakhpur. The Sardar suggested that he should cetrainly be transferred to some place with a better climate Bapu said, 'Yes, but we must apply for the transfer ourselves, if we want it, and I have no mind to do so Harilal was in the worst prison in South Africa, but his transfer was arranged by him himself and not by me' The Sardar said, 'But we are not prisoners here The circumstances in India are different Let us apply by all means' Bapu yielded after all and wired to Hailey . ."

58. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

June 18, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE,

In continuation of my letter of the 9th instant regarding Shrimati Mirabai (Slade) I now enclose her original letter[1] dated Bombay, June 14, 1932 (placed below), just received in reply to my enquiry[2]. In my opinion, the precise language of this full letter is conclusive answer to the statement that she was "actively engaged in the furtherance of the civil disobedience movement". I think that Government should be in possession of this emphatic denial of the information before them in connection with her doings before her incarceration. To save time I have marked the relevant portions of the letter.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40) (2), Pt I, p. 115

59. LETTER TO KUSUMBEHN DESAI

June 18, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR)[3],

I got both your letters. You cannot come to see me till the restriction on Mirabehn is lifted. Isn't that what self-denial means?

We shall not do justice to Harilal if we do not publish his letters to you. Surely it was no fault of his that you could not live up to his ideals. You should do so now. You ought not to withhold the letters in order to hide your weakness. But why should you despair and feel weak? Or is it, rather, that you think you are too old? How can you give up hope at the age of twenty-four or twenty-five? In fact this is the time of life when you can strive and rise. Take care!!!

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1810

[1] *Vide* footnote on p. 46.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", pp. 18-9.

[3] Widow of Harilal Maneklal Desai, an Ashram inmate

60. LETTER TO SUSHILABEHN GANDHI

June 18, 1932

CHI. SUSHILA,

I hope you got my letter When I wrote it, I believed that Manilal must have left. It must indeed have been an ordeal for you all. But that is how we are really tested. I hope that no effects of illness are left now. Did you have to call in a doctor, or did you try only common remedies? How do you help in the press?

I assume now that Manilal also will remain there. Do not feel unhappy about that. We should live as God ordains. Our wishes are not always fulfilled.

Sita is now growing up Do you teach her anything? Has your hearing improved?

Ask Pragji[1] and Parvati to write to me All three of us will be glad to get their letter. Will Pragji stay on there now? I would be happy if you cease being lazy in writing to me and make your letters full of news But you are daughter of a big man and I can't take you to task if you don't do that. And, moreover, it was Jamnalalji who arranged the marriage. If you were daughter of an ordinary man, I would have forced you to write long and detailed letters!!!

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 4789

[1] Pragji Khandubhai Desai, a co-worker of Gandhiji during the South African period, wrote regularly for the Gujarati section of *Indian Opinion*

61. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

June 18, 1932

CHI. MANILAL,

I got your letter sent with Medh[1]. I don't think I shall be able to see him. In the first place, as Mirabehn is not permitted to see me I have stopped seeing any visitors. And, secondly, the name of every intending visitor has to be sent to the Government and Medh's name is not likely to be approved. Even if he is permitted to see me, I don't think we would be allowed to discuss the affairs of South Africa. In the letter asking for the permission, he should state as the reason his intention to discuss them. If I see him then, there would be no need to send a cable to you. But I did not have even a letter from Medh. He can at any rate write to me.

So you were all attacked by the virulent fever. In the absence of any news by cable, I assume that all of you are well. I approved of Sushila's and Sita's staying on there because I thought they were certain to keep better health there. And so it seems God sent me this message through your illness: 'You are a fool. Who are you to think who would keep better health where? I keep people healthy or make them ill as I choose. Why don't you understand this simple thing?' Though I have now learnt this wisdom, I still think that it might be better for them to remain in South Africa. But now it seems that you, too, will have to remain there. I also think that, if Pragji is not ready to shoulder the responsibility or if the responsibility is beyond his capacity and if you cannot make any other arrangement, you cannot come. It would not be proper to close the paper at this time. The problems here will take care of themselves. Stay there without worrying about things here, and don't feel unhappy that you cannot come. After all, you live there for public service and not for your own happiness. Write to me regularly.

All three of us are very well. We do plenty of spinning, of course. I now rotate the wheel with my foot and draw the thread with the right hand. Even otherwise, I wished to ex-

[1] Surendra Medh, a leading satyagrahi during the South African struggle

periment on this spinning-wheel for the sake of Prabhudas. But now I have an additional reason for spinning on it, namely, that my left elbow needs rest. Mahadev spins yarn of 40 counts. Sardar makes envelopes from useless paper. It is in one such envelope that I intend to seal this letter.

Ramdas is in this jail. He sees me sometimes. His health is all right. He is reading and studying at present. Nimu and the children are in the Ashram.

Devdas is far away in Gorakhpur He has been having fever for some days. But there is no cause for anxiety. The fever is now receding.

Ba is in Sabarmati [jail] and Kanti[1] in Visapur [jail]. There are many others, too, in jail, but I need not mention them here Did I tell you that Devdas is engaged to Rajaji's daughter[2]? The engagement was the result of the strong desire of them both. Because of the struggle, they have put off the marriage.

A good many reforms are being introduced in the Ashram By reforms I mean further measures of self-control

Personally, I never think as to when the struggle would end. Let it end when it will. For him who fights for Truth and with truthful means, victory and defeat are the same. That is, he always wins, though the victory may come now or in future

Sardar and Mahadev send their blessings.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 4790

62 LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

June 18, 1932

CHI VANAMALA,

Your first attempt at writing a letter in Hindi was good. Did you write it without anybody's help? Your handwriting can be still better. All of you should do cleaning work in the Ashram with great care. One does not get peace everywhere. Alteration of heat and cold is the law of the world.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 5774 Also C W 2997 Courtesy Vanamala M Desai

[1] Son of Harilal Gandhi
[2] Lakshmi

63. *LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS*

June 18, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

God never does evil, for He is Truth. Hence man himself is responsible for the evil that he does. Whatever good we do is inspired by Him, and, therefore, it may be said that He does it.

As for the degree of proficiency in Sanskrit, you should know the language well enough to be able to understand the *Gita*. This includes grammar.

If you find that the work has increased so much that you do not get even half an hour every day completely free, you should reduce the period of study. Don't think that you will learn less to that extent. By taking half an hour's rest, you will increase your capacity for grasping to that extent and so on balance there will be nothing but gain. Scientists have proved this by experiments.

Besides books on religion, there are plenty of books on other subjects in the Ashram which you can read. Everybody may select from them and read the books which he likes. The books are not only in Gujarati, but also in Urdu, Hindi, even in Sanskrit, and of course in English.

I assume that the new office-bearers elected will do their duty properly.

I observe that boys and girls are careless in using paper. That should not be. And they should never tear out sheets from exercise books and write on them.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

64. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

June 18, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

You should not be afraid of anything you may see in a dream. Nor should you feel unhappy about it. If kitten sit in my lap, so do children.[1] A cat has no reason, whereas human beings have it. Hence there is nothing in a cat's life for which one may wish to be born a cat.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C W 9435 Courtesy Ravindra R Patel

65. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

June 18, 1932

You will be surprised, but I would advise you just now to stop reading even the works of Raychandbhai and the *Gita*.[2] Reflect on whatever you understand from the *Gita* verses and the *bhajans* which are recited or sung during prayers This self-restraint will be difficult to exercise, but you will see its miraculous effect. At present, your reading has become your work Whenever you are free, take up some useful work to do. Give up trying to understand things with your reason. This is the meaning of "one step enough for me". One should give up any aid which becomes a bond.

BAPU

[PS.]

There is no harm in your reading newspapers.

From a copy of the Gujarati: C W 348 Courtesy Bhagwanji P Pandya

[1] The addressee had written "You play a lot with the kitten and let them sit in your lap How I wish I were born a cat too!" (*Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I, p 233)

[2] The addressee read too many books on religion and brooded too much.

66. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

June 18, 1932

I got your letter. I think it would be better not to write about the Lothian report[1], though I see nothing wrong in principle in doing that. Personally, I would not even wish to write about it. I would always feel that I didn't have sufficient data for the purpose. Why, then, waste mental energy and also time in trying to write about it?

Devdas has taken ill. The fever is receding now and there is no cause for anxiety. Manilal, Sushila, Sita, Pragji and his daughter, all of them had caught virulent fever in Natal, but the latest news about them was reassuring.

I had never thought that you would write a play[2]. Your thoughts are turning towards ultra-modern reforms. I do believe that within certain limits divorce should be permitted, but I would not at all care to propagate that idea. Generally we are such slaves of the psychological forces in us that no one will wager that his mind will be in the same state tomorrow in which it is today. I, therefore, feel even now that a marriage tie voluntarily entered into ought not to be broken without a very strong reason. If I had divorced Ba on the difference over untouchability, surely we would never have known the beautiful relation between us which exists today. Who can say in what condition Ba would be living and with whom I would have rushed into marriage? But the idea that there can be no divorce was ingrained in us, and so

[1] The Franchise Committee under Lord Lothian had published its report on June 3, 1932 in which it had proposed an increase in the total number of voters in the provincial electorates from 7 millions to over 30 millions, or nearly 30 per cent of the total adult population, and for the due representation of all classes and sections of the community. Regarding its recommendations, according to Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji said: "The Committee has done well in so far as it has come forward with a definition of untouchability and calculated the number of 'untouchables' so called at three crores and a half instead of the usual seven crores. For this Lothian is perhaps entitled to credit. Thanks to this definition, Hindus, if they wish, can incorporate 'untouchables' into Hindu society in one moment and at a stroke satisfy all the demands ostensibly made on their behalf" (*Mahatma*, Vol. III, p. 197; *India in 1931-32*, pp. 50-1 and *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol I, p. 147)

[2] Advocating divorce

the crisis passed and only its memory is left now. I hope, therefore, that you have not advocated in your play unfettered freedom for a husband or a wife to divorce either party at will.

If it were man's duty to gratify his carnal passion, I would certainly understand the necessity of artificial means of birth-control.[1] If, however, we regard gratification of passion without a desire for progeny as sin—and according to me it should be so regarded—it would be putting a premium on sin to prevent progeny by artificial means. It is Nature's eternal law that one shall reap as one sows. If man indulges his carnal passion, let him bear the burden of progeny. The question why the woman should bear it does not arise, since we regard her as completely free. The adoption of artificial means of birth-control in the West is already producing one result, namely, that the sanctity of marriage is disappearing and men and women gratify their lust without any restraint. It is not many years since these means came into vogue, and yet the bond which had been held as sacred all this time is losing its strength. Advanced thinkers in the West now look upon marriage as a superstition and see nothing evil even in a brother and a sister feeling passion for each other and gratifying it, but, on the contrary, regard it as completely normal. I don't look upon these views as the swinging of the pendulum to the other extreme. I think that they are the direct and natural result of the same attitude of mind which lies at the back of artificial birth-control. It is possible that the bonds of marriage, etc., which we now regard as spiritually uplifting may actually be spiritually degrading. But I simply cannot go beyond conceding such a possibility for the sake of argument. All such talk in the name of ethics and science seems extremely dangerous to me. These new ideas are raining from the fountain of false compassion and impatience and of the thinkers' experiences limited to the hour of pleasure. I wish that we do not get drenched by this rain. Moreover, having regard also to the conditions in India we have no use whatever, for these artificial methods. Millions are ruined in health and have become weak in minds. If they start gratifying their passion as soon as it is aroused, there would be an end to all possibility of our progress. Some of the men who have been using these means are almost impotent. Cast a glance at the advertisements which appear in newspapers. I am writing all this from wide observation. I wrote the articles in *Nitinashane Marge*[2]

[1] The addressee had argued in favour of birth-control.
[2] "Towards Moral Bankruptcy"; *vide* Vol. XXXI.

in reply to letters received every week from enfeebled students and teachers. The youth of India need just now to learn the lesson of self-control, however painfully it may be. The condition of girls, too, is most extraordinary. How strange that a girl like . . . [1], brought up in the Ashram, only fifteen years old and weak in body, should express a desire to get married? How is it that a girl of her age feels passion? But the whole atmosphere in our society is unclean. From their very childhood boys and girls are fed on impure suggestions. I would never consent to teach such boys and girls that it was right and proper to yield to passion. But I will not dwell further on this subject. You will understand my views from what I have said.

Pyarelal is in Dhulia [jail] and Devdas in Gorakhpur [jail]. In the Dhulia jail, one may say that they have formed a society for the study of the *Gita*, for Vinoba daily discourses on the work.

Since your health is good otherwise, I am not at all concerned at your having lost 17 lb. Weight is a factor in judging the state of one's health only within certain limits. Jamnalalji has lost 25 lb. There is of course a difference between his condition and yours. You cannot afford to lose weight as liberally as he can.

I hear from time to time from Taramati and Dilip[2]. I had asked them to come and see me. They were about to come, when I suddenly stopped seeing visitors. If the gates open again, I will repeat the invitation.

The *Times* weekly gives every month a map of the stars visible in the sky at the time. All of you should have a look at it. I myself have been watching the stars every night and enjoy the experience immensely. I have woken up in old age. But what harm can there be in waking up even on death-bed if watching the stars helps one to have a glimpse of the soul? My blessings to all who may see you.

[PS.]

The envelope in which this letter will be sealed was made by Sardar from the envelope in which your own letter was received. Making envelopes has become his occupation. Any addition to the country's wealth is welcome.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, pp. 110-2

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

[2] Addressee's son

67. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

June 18, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

It is a bad thing to commit a mistake. That is why we should be ashamed of it. But having committed it, it is a good thing to ask to be forgiven. Hence what is there to be ashamed of in asking to be forgiven? It implies a determination not to repeat the mistake. Once this determination is there, why should one be ashamed? Have you understood this?

Why should truth and non-violence be compared? But, if one must make the comparison, I would say that truth is superior even to non-violence, for, falsehood too is violence. And he who loves truth is bound to turn to non-violence some day.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original C W 9950. Courtesy. Shardabehn G Chokhawala

68. LETTER TO DR. HIRALAL SHARMA

June 18, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

Shrimati Behn Amtussalaam sent me some time ago your pamphlets and the two volumes of your book, *Light and Colour in the Medical World.* I am grateful for your having treated Amtulbehn with extreme care and attention which she tells me you gave her As for the literature on Light and Colour I can express no opinion, as I have no experience, worth the name, of this treatment.

As I have not much faith in drugs and as I believe in the great healing power of the sun, naturally I would love to find that the methods you are advocating are sound and can bear investigation. If under the restrictions in which I am living I can make any experiments, I shall do so.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solan varsh, p 8

69. PRAYER[1]

June 19, 1932

Prayer is the very foundation of the Ashram. We should, therefore, clearly understand what it means. If it is not offered from the heart, it is no prayer at all. We rarely see anybody dozing while eating. Prayer is a million times more important than food. If anybody dozes at prayer time, his condition must be pitiable indeed. If we miss the prayer, we should feel deeply pained. We should not mind if we miss a meal, but we should never miss a prayer. Missing a meal is sometimes beneficial for health. Omitting prayer never is.

If any person dozes at the time of prayer, feels lazy or talks with his neighbours while the prayer is going on, does not fix his attention on it and lets his thoughts wander, he has as good as absented himself from it. His physical presence is mere show. He is, therefore, doubly guilty; he has absented himself from the prayer and has deceived the people. To deceive means to act untruthfully, and, therefore, to violate the vow of truth.

If, however, anybody feels sleepy or bored against his will, what should he do? But this can never happen. If we run straight from the bed to the prayer meeting, we are bound to feel sleepy. Before going to the meeting, we should rouse ourselves fully and brush our teeth, and resolve to remain awake and alert. In the meeting we should not sit close to one another, should sit erect like a walking-stick, breathe slowly and, if we can speak the words correctly, join in reciting the verses or singing the *bhajans*, silently to ourselves if not loudly. If we cannot do even this, we may go on repeating Ramanama. If we still cannot control our body, we should keep standing. No one, whether a grown-up person or a child, should feel shame in doing so. Grown-up persons should occasionally keep standing, even if they do not feel sleepy, in order to create an atmosphere in which nobody would feel ashamed of standing.

Everyone should make an effort and understand as soon as possible the meaning of what is recited or sung for prayer. Even

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 16/19-6-1932; *vide* the following item.

if a person does not know Sanskrit, he should learn the meaning of each verse and meditate over it.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati. M.M U./II

70. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

June 16/19, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your packet on Tuesday. Read my reply[1] to Jethalal's letter. I have not received his report. Send it by registered post. You have sent Hiralal Shastri's[2] account of his "Jivankutir", but it is not accompanied by any letter from him nor do you mention anything in your letter. If you know, please tell me something about him I have already written to you about Sitala Sahay. I hope you also got the postcard I wrote about Mahavir.

I send with this a letter for Medh. Manilal's problem has become very complicated. I think we should now give up the hope of his coming.

About prayers, I intend to write a separate article, so that it may be useful to all. I, therefore, do not write anything about it in this letter. It will be enough if you are able to keep up the new rule[3] which has been adopted.

The labourers should wear khadi, send their children, if they have any, to the Ashram school, give up smoking, but only if they can easily do so, should be free from the vice of drinking and, if they are staying on the Ashram premises, attend the morning or the evening prayer. It should not be enough if they wear khadi when in the Ashram but not outside. If they like spinning, they may spin, otherwise they need not. I think we should not lay down any other condition besides these. However, we should have faith that if we take interest in their lives, share their joys and sorrows, and care for their children, they will observe the other rules voluntarily and in the proper spirit. Just now, we should only explain to them the meaning and importance of those rules. If our company really has the power of improving them, Tulsi-

[1] *Vide* pp 73-4.

[2] A constructive worker of Rajasthan, founder of the Vanasthali Vidyapith

[3] About five minutes' silence during prayer time

das's assurance[1] will not be proved false. We shall be tested, too. Up to now we have not looked upon labourers as our kith and kin. It is true that we have tried to be friendly with them, but we have done so patronizingly. There has always been a feeling in us that we are in some way superior to them. The more I understand the truth, the more I realize that nobody is superior or inferior to others. And we cannot judge, we have no means at all of judging, who has more holy merit earned in past lives. Who can say whether the mustard seed or the mountain is superior? We don't regard a thing as superior or inferior because of its size Similarly, we cannot compare the relative worth of persons. I have, therefore, suggested the easiest rule—I should say, rather, that I have extracted it from Shastras—that everybody should regard himself as a cipher. We shall then never feel proud about ourselves. If you or anybody else, who has more practical experience of life than I, see any error in this reasoning of mine regarding labourers, please point it out to me. It will of course be difficult to act upon it. But there must be some difficulty in every attempt to do a good thing.

I feel that Dhiru and Kusum have returned much too quickly. There must be some reason why they did so. If you have been able to know it, tell me what it is. I had Dhiru's letter from Ranavav last week, in which he had said that both of them kept good health and that their weight was improving. Hence I infer that they have returned so soon because something must have happened there which hurt them. I have already explained to you my reason for not writing "Blessings from" when signing the letters —it saves energy. My blessings must be assumed.

I think that Ba's reply that the illness was caused by mangoes is not correct. Her attitude is that one should not eat mangoes at a difficult time like this, and she is right from her own point of view. She wishes in the depth of her heart that I also should feel in the same way, and the reason is her love for me. She has seen the fruit of the little self-control which I have exercised. In the past it used to trouble her and she could not even understand its aim, but gradually she realized its value. However, this time I have not excluded mangoes from my diet. Fresh fruit is essential in the diet experiment which I am making. I have always found that mangoes benefit me. Hence, when some mangoes were sent to me unasked, I did not object to eating them. The fact that I

[1] "The wicked are reformed in the company of the righteous." (*Ramacharitamanasa*—Balkanda)

had no objection to eating mangoes became known and so parcels have been coming one after another. However, I don't criticize Ba's resolution not to eat mangoes.

If you begin mixing with the Chharas, do not give up the practice afterwards. If, however, you discover that the task is beyond your strength, you may give up the attempt. None the less I do believe that it is our duty to mix with them even at some sacrifice to ourselves. We should not try to mix with them in the hope that thereby we shall save ourselves from possible harassment by them. If we entertain any such hope, we shall not save ourselves. God will save us, if He wills. If He does not, we will welcome the harassment as His loving gift. We should regard it as our duty to mix with them because they are our neighbours. According to me, the person most qualified to make the attempt is Panditji[1]. The first time we go in their midst, we should go singing *Ramdhun*. But it is necessary that Panditji should have faith in himself for this purpose. He can also take with him a party of children who will lead the procession. We can take up the job of teaching the Chhara children. We can help the Chharas who may fall ill. If we take up that work, one person should devote himself exclusively to it We can help them in two ways in illness. In ordinary cases, we ourselves may treat the patients. If a case is beyond our skill, we may ask for help from doctors with whom the Ashram has connections, and I think they will be glad to give it.

Tell Chhakkaddas that I was so pleased with the slivers sent by him that I would not mind having more. I do not get here slivers of such fine cotton. If, therefore, he would like to send more, as he said he would, he may. I will not use them, for I don't think I can spin yarn of 40 counts on the Magan spinning-wheel. I have not heard of anybody else either, who could do so. And slivers like those are too good for yarn of lower count. Mahadev requires at most 30 *tolas* of slivers every month, and there is no immediate need. He has enough slivers from the lot sent by Chhakkaddas to last for thirty days. After it is finished, Mahadev will surely try to spin with the slivers prepared here and see what count he can produce with them. I have stated all this only in order that Chhakkaddas may not think it necessary to work very hard and send the slivers immediately. And he may send them only if he can do so without any inconvenience. Chimanlal and you should consider independently whether Chhakkaddas should be put to all this trouble, and, if you think

[1] Narayan M. Khare

that he had made the offer merely through his goodness and that really it would be much trouble to him to send the slivers, do not convey my message to him. I send with this Totaramji's letter. Bhansali[1] is really very strong in his firmness Where is Lilabehn[2], and what does she do? Has she kept up any connection with the Ashram? I did not get any letter from Ramnarayan Choudhari[3]. And now that the Ashram has been shifted to Wardha, he may even have courted arrest. If you have heard anything more about the matter, please let me know.

Where is Lalji[4] working at present? Is there no yarn in Vijapur or Amreli? Does any person on behalf of the Government stay in the Vidyapith? And does he use the buildings for any purpose? I hope Kanaiyalal has now completely recovered. You must have come to know that Damodardas is in serious difficulties.

I got your second letter while I was writing this. I had got a direct wire, too, about Devdas. I have sent a wire in return asking for more details. I have not received any reply to it so far.

BAPU

June 19, 1932

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8231. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

71. *LETTER TO LAURI SAWYER*[5]

June 19, 1932

MY DEAR LAURI,

Prof. Horace Alexander reminds me of your existence and tells me how weak you are. Of course I remember you perfectly. Weak in body you may be, but the very first time I met you I saw how

[1] Professor Jaikrishnadas Prabhudas Bhansali

[2] Bhansali's sister-in-law, a widow

[3] A prominent Congress leader of Rajasthan who assisted in editing *Hindi Navajivan*

[4] Lalji K. Parmar, a Harijan student from Panchmahals

[5] Prefacing this, Mahadev Desai writes: "Among our many women helpers in England was Lauri Sawyer. She had suffered from cancer first and then from tuberculosis, but I have seen few girls so cheerful and bright as she was. Horace suggested that she was not likely to live very much longer, Bapu should write her a letter. He therefore at once wrote to her. . . ."; *vide* also "Letter to Horace G. Alexander", pp. 86-7.

strong you were in will. And if God wants more service from you in your present existence, He will give you sufficient strength of body. For those who have faith in God, life and death are alike. Ours is to serve till the last breath. Do write to me when you can. Love from Mahadeo.

Yours,
BAPU

PS.

I write nothing about ourselves as you must know all there is to know.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 232

72. *LETTER TO JETHALAL G. SAMPAT*[1]

June 19, 1932

I consider yours to be a scientific experiment, and therefore I have been watching you all along and have desired to follow your work in full detail. You are a seasoned worker and will encounter many more difficulties in the future. This is the usual pattern of every great work: once in a while we feel that the line is now clear and we shall be able to make rapid progress. We then relax a little, but all at once we notice a deep ditch in front of us. Therefore you must settle there permanently. The one thing needful is infinite patience with self-confidence at the root of it. Self-confidence means an unflinching faith in one's work. Once this faith is acquired, there is no need to be anxious about the numerous errors we are unconsciously bound to commit from time to time. We must not permit ourselves to be paralysed by the fear that we are perhaps on the wrong path. I consider your experiment to be scientific, yet I think it is not perfectly scientific now, but your work shares in all the characteristics of a scientific experiment, and you have the patience needed in carrying it out. I had noticed one defect in you before, but I think you have remedied it intelligently. Or perhaps your devotion to truth has helped you to remedy it without being conscious of it. That defect was this. you were satisfied with incomplete data and drew hasty conclusions from them. But this is no longer the case. A scientific experimenter has profound confidence in himself

[1] The addressee had sent a report of his work among the poor of Anantapur, a village in Madhya Pradesh where he had been engaged in constructive work for the last three years

and is therefore never down-hearted. At the same time he is so humble that he is never satisfied with his own work, and is not guilty of drawing hasty conclusions. On the other hand he measures his progress off and on and declares emphatically that the result of 'x' can be 'y' only. Our workers are generally lacking in this humility of the real man of science I was therefore not surprised when I found that you were not an exception to this rule But I do believe that you have the power of persevering till the end. Ardently wishing that you may not suffer even from this little limitation, I gently drew your attention to it many years ago. In order to succeed you must first collect a band of fellow-workers around you. They are bound to be gradually attracted to you in view of the work you are doing. In order to attract them you must cultivate the quality of tolerance springing from generosity. Co-workers cannot do everything that we are doing or we want them to do. But if they are well-intentioned and diligent, we should not despise their assistance. Only thus can we hope to build up a team. In the absence of such an accommodating spirit some of us have to plough a lonely furrow.

One thing more about your work. You should cultivate a desire to take tips even from those who are working on other lines. It is a mistake to suppose that a scientific experiment can be performed in one particular manner, and those who fall into such error stand to lose a good deal. We for ourselves may follow a method which we think to be right or perfect, but if others do not recognize its perfection or notice defects in it, we should let them go their own way. We thus increase our power of comprehension.

I cannot say anything about your present method of work. As I am partial to you, it seems to be all right from here. But if I am able to see you actually at work, it is possible that many ideas would occur to me and I would place them before you for consideration. I cannot picture your work accurately from this distance. It would therefore be an impertinence to offer any suggestions.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 234-5

73. LETTER TO SHAMAL R RAVAL

June 19, 1932

CHI. SHAMAL,

It will be well if the food which you eat suits you. The fact that you suffer from constipation indicates that you should eat boiled vegetables in good quantity.

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 3142 Also C W 2881. Courtesy: Shamal R Raval

74 LETTER TO NANABHAI I. MASHRUWALA

June 19, 1932

BHAI NANABHAI,

I have your letter. I got as much of Manilal's letter as you have copied out and sent to me. If there is anything in the est of the letter which may interest me, please make a copy and send it to me

I also feel that, since Pragji refuses to shoulder the responsibility of *Indian Opinion*, Manilal should stay on [in South Africa]. He should not abandon it as long as he has confidence that he can run it. His first duty is to that paper. After all, we wish to do public service, no matter where. We should be satisfied if all of them are happy in South Africa The fever which spread in Natal was of a deadly character. They have survived the present attack at any rate I was happy at the news that Sushila and Sita were staying behind, thinking that they were bound to keep better health there. But does anybody know what he should rejoice at and what weep for? We should stop doing either.

Give my condolences to Dadasaheb Mahajani's family.

Sardar and Mahadev send their regards.

How does Tara[1] spend her time?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N. 7520 Also C W 4996 Courtesy: Kanubhai Mashruwala

[1] Addressee's daughter

75. LETTER TO PUNJABHAI H. SHAH[1]

June 19, 1932

You write well indeed. You have made the best use of your life. One whose aim in life is service and who remains in that state of mind till death may be said to have made the best use of one's life. Narandas informs me that you fainted once again. One day you will fall into eternal sleep as a result of such an attack. Welcome it when it comes.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 233

76. LETTER TO A CHILD

June 19, 1932

Generally people do not like to clean utensils or lavatories. We, therefore, get such work done by members of certain communities. This is wrong. Anybody, therefore, who does such work for the good of the world does service through it.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 233

77. A LETTER[2]

June 19, 1932

He alone is a lover of truth who follows it in all conditions of life. Nobody is forced to tell lies in business or in service. One should not accept a job which does so, even if one starves in consequence.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 231-2

[1] The co-worker, who had helped Gandhiji to acquire the land on which the Sabarmati Ashram was subsequently built, was ill at this time and died in October 1932. For Gandhiji's reminiscences of him, *vide* Vol. LI, "Long Live Punjabhai", 23-10-1932.

[2] The addressee had sought Gandhiji's advice on an alternative to his job of a cloth merchant's assistant which obliged him to tell lies.

78. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

June 20, 1932

MY DEAR BHRRR[1],

You can't disappoint me even if you try.[2] You may not therefore allow such a thought to depress you. You have simply to dance when Raihana[3] sings. We are all glad you seem to be nearing the end of earthly troubles

Please send my salaams to the Hamid Alis. I am sure they do not think you have spoilt their holiday by giving yourself well-deserved rest on that beautiful hill. You will be surprised to know that I have never been there.

Our love to you.

Yours,
BHRRR

From a photostat. S N. 9578

79. LETTER TO PRINCESS EFY ARISTARCHI

June 20, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I continue to receive your kind messages. The latest brings the news of your financial worries. My prayers are certainly with you. Those who walk in the fear of God do not fear financial or any other losses. They often come to the godfearing as blessings in disguise. May this trouble be so with you. Your faith and fortitude should cheer your aged mother.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[1] This was a form of greeting between Gandhiji and the addressee

[2] The addressee, being unable to court imprisonment again, had written "Need I say there is hardly a minute of my conscious hours when I am not thinking of you and your companions and wondering how much I am disappointing you " (*Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I, p 239)

[3] Addressee's daughter

[PS.]

You know the next part of the beautiful verse[1] you have quoted from an Upanishad[2]. It means "Enjoy the world by renouncing it". How apposite!

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p. 238

80. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

June 20, 1932

Who can say whether it is better for him or her to remain ill or to enjoy good health? Haven't you heard the story of Nala and Damayanti? Nala was very handsome. To save him, God ordered a cobra named Karkotaka to bite him and make him ugly. As the cobra bit Nala, the latter became nervous. But in the end he realized that it was divine providence. I think that is exactly so in your case. You should, therefore, go on trying remedies to cure your illness, but never feel that the illness is a misfortune. Whatever your state of health, you should sing and dance and serve Mother.[3]

My sermon is over. You should keep smiling. No matter what happens. If you have surrendered your all to God, your body is His, not yours. The disease, too, is suffered by Him, not by you. Why, then, should you feel unhappy? I shall have to try to understand the meaning of the *ghazal*[4] which you have translated into Gujarati. You think you have got an intelligent pupil. Your eyes will open in a short time. Why should an intelligent person become anybody's pupil? And particularly a pupil of a teacher like you? It doesn't matter, therefore. I am what you deserve. Or, rather, you are what I deserve. Who can say whether you chose me as a pupil or I put you in the chair as my teacher?

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 239-40

[1] "Everything in this universe is pervaded by God."

[2] *Ishopanishad*, 1

[3] Gandhiji wrote this paragraph in Urdu; the source has it transliterated into Gujarati.

[4] A lyric in Urdu or Persian

81. LETTER TO ROHINIBEHN DESAI

June 20, 1932

CHI. ROHINI[1],

I got your and Surbala's letters. What a coincidence that I got your and Hamida's letters almost at the same time! Next time you feel inspired to write, tell me how you spent your time in jail.

I hope uncle's health is all right now. Our blessings to both you sisters.

BAPU

SMT. ROHINIBEHN
C/o SJT. KANJIBHAI DESAI
GOPIPURA, SURAT

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2657

82. LETTER TO HANUMANPRASAD PODDAR

June 21, 1932

In answering questions on spiritual matters it is an advantage to keep in mind the particular inquirer.[2] To write for newspapers is a difficult task for me. My mind has turned almost blank upon learning that you have asked the questions with a view to publish them in *Kalyan*. It does not mean that the public gains nothing from what I write for the papers. I am simply explaining my own point of view. That is why I have reiterated many a time in *Young India* that it was not a journal for me but a weekly letter meant for friends. And the spiritual matters discussed in *Young India* and *Navajivan* have been almost invariably written with a certain individual in view. It has a reason behind

[1] Daughter of Kanaiyalal Desai

[2] The addressee in an earlier letter had asked Gandhiji to narrate some incidents of his life which had awakened and strengthened his faith in God, to which Gandhiji replied on May 23, 1932 and inquired if the question had been put with a view to using the answer in *Kalyan*, a Hindi journal on religious matters published by the addressee.

means meditating on the meaning of any verse or phrase from it.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 182

85. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

June 21, 1932

BHAISHRI KHAMBHATTA,

I got your letter. I had obtained permission for both of you to come and see me and was about to write to you, when an order was issued barring Mirabehn from seeing me. I thought it my duty not to see other visitors if I could not see her, and so I stopped the interviews. I am still trying to get the order barring Mirabehn withdrawn. Hence I did not write to you immediately. I assumed that you must have heard about the order against her. I think you know that last time I had stopped seeing visitors on account of the Naoroji sisters, and so I thought you would draw the necessary inference. I had obtained permission for you to see me not in your capacity as a bone-setter but as a friend. Of course, if you had come you would have examined my elbow, and if you had then thought daily massaging of the arm necessary I would have had to obtain special permission for that. How could I make it a principle not to let you do such service to me? I would certainly be happy if your touching my arm could cure the pain. But it is true that I would prefer, though not as a matter of principle, to leave the responsibility of calling in a doctor from outside to the Government. But such a necessity has not arisen in this case. The condition of the arm has not become hopelessly bad. Mahadev does massage the arm as well as he can with the help of your book. Major Mehta has joined here as a doctor on special duty. He is trying electric shocks. If these measures have no effect and the doctors here confess their failure, the question of calling in help from outside will naturally arise and then you will be able to come in your capacity as a bone-setter even though I may not be seeing any visitors. I have always fully understood your love for me and, therefore, will not feel the slightest hesitation in accepting any service from you. I would even request it if I need it. At which place is the hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light", to be sung? Or will you two sing it every Friday in your home? If you sing it in your home and if no English friends are present,

I suppose you know that the *Ashram Bhajanavali* contains a Gujarati translation[1] of the hymn in case you wish to use it. You may sing it if you like it. Here we sing that. Is Father Elwin with you at present or is he still in the Ashram? You had mentioned a special oil for the massage. If, apart from the massage, the oil itself has an effect, send a little of it. I hope both of you are well. All three of us are quite happy.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 7549. Also C.W. 5024. Courtesy: Tehmina Khambhatta

86. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

June 22, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter came in yesterday.

I am defeated. I have taken milk and baker's bread and therefore salt also. Major Bhandari will not let me make experiments that might endanger health. And he thought it was time for me to take milk and bread, also fruit. He is of opinion that absence of salt must reduce weight and that I cannot afford to lose. I succumbed. The saltless experiment I must reserve for a future day. I am none the worse for the brief experiment, if I am not better. I have made certain observations. But they are of no value as they are based on much too short-lived an experiment. You will tell me of your experiment, if you have made further discoveries.

Your previous letter[2] I have sent to the Government in confirmation of my letter[3]. Let us see what happens.

You asked what the electrical treatment was. It is called high frequency—it consists in rubbing with a flat glass bulb charged with violet rays. Exposure to the early morning sun should serve the same purpose except [for] this [that the] instrumental rays are hot.

Then you asked about the Ashram history. I am trying to deal with every phase of the Ashram activities. But the work is proceeding very slowly. Somehow or other I do not give it some

[1] "*Premal Jyoti*" by Narasinhrao Divetia

[2] *Vide* footnote on p. 46

[3] *Vide* "Letter to E. E. Doyle", p. 58.

time every day. And as yet, I have not felt like giving it resolutely one hour daily. However, if I am here long enough, the history will, God willing, be certainly finished.

Damodardas has written. He seems to have been hurt by the last conversation you had under his roof. I have asked him to talk to you about it. But you will yourself ask him what hurt him. I know you could have no intention of hurting him. I have begged of him to give up speculation altogether and be satisfied with a humble life. Devdas has enteric though of a mild type. You should write to him. His address is District Jail, Gorakhpur, U.P.

I do not suppose you have noticed that "The valiant only taste of death but once" has a deeper meaning conveying the perfect truth according to the Hindu conception of salvation.[1] It means freedom from the wheel of birth and death. If the word 'valiant' may be taken to mean those who are strong in their search after God, they die but once, for they need not be reborn and put on the mortal coil.

The weather here at this time of the year is always cool. We, too, had showers.

My congratulations to Shantabai on her taking up the wheel again.

I am glad you are mothering Tilak[2]. He needs it. Of course Noorbanu[3] is very good to him. But he does not speak enough Hindi to be able to talk to her to his heart's content. And Noorbanu cannot give him what you can. Of course you will try to see her and Pyare Ali.

Yes, I wrote to Narandas suggesting five minutes' silence. I forgot to write to you about it. I am not doing it here. It is unnecessary here and for you it is impracticable. The rapid repetition of Ramanama in a new assembly is undoubtedly good. For very rapid repetition, mere Ram, Ram, Ram Ram . . . is often used. If it is done with proper cadence, the effect is ecstatic. Yes, we get up at 3.40. The prayer at 4 and 7.30.

My love to Nargis and Jal. I am glad the former has so improved. I do not remember the name Hilla Petit. I may have met her.

[1] According to *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 185, the addressee "very much liked Bapu's description of life as preparation for death, and quoted Shakespeare: 'Cowards die many times before their deaths, / The valiant only taste of death but once.' She thought these lines did not convey Bapu's idea".

[2] A student at the Ashram

[3] Wife of Pyare Ali

I am glad Gulab and Manilal have seen you. Tell them to write to me. I do not need the ghee now.

I hope you are not overworking yourself.

Love from us all.

BAPU

[PS.]

You know that the Quaker practice during silence does not require the closing of the eyes. In that case the difficulty about the time is overcome. But for you all this is needless.

From the original C W 6226 Courtesy. Mirabehn Also G N 9692

87. LETTER TO TILAKAM

June 22, 1932

She[1] is a pure soul with an infinite capacity for self-sacrifice.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p. 425

88. LETTER TO SHANTABEHN G. PATEL

June 22, 1932

CHI. SHANTA,

I hear from Bhaktibehn[2] that you intend to come to see Narasinhbhai[3] in the beginning of July. Whenever you come, see Bhaktibehn too. When you see Narasinhbhai, give him my regards I don't ask him just now to see me, and he controls his desire to come and see me as an example to others. I have read most of the books sent by you. Now they are being read by the women.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. SHANTABEHN NARASINHBHAI
C/O GORDHANDAS P. PATEL, ESQ.
POONA CITY[4]

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 5229

[1] Mirabehn

[2] Wife of Darbar Gopaldas

[3] Addressee's father

[4] The letter was addressed by Gandhiji to Patidar Karyalaya, Anand, from where it was redirected to this address

89. LETTER TO HORACE G. ALEXANDER

June 23, 1932

MY DEAR HORACE,

I have your two letters. It was just like you to remind me about Laura. I remember her quite well. She appealed to me at once as a beautiful character. And then it was Charlie who, I think, brought her to me. I wrote to her at once and sent my letter[1] by air mail. At least I asked the authorities to send it so and wrote it in time for the air mail. I know that she is brave enough to face all the illnesses that may be in store for her and death.

We are all three keeping well and quite fit. Mahadev and I pass the time spinning, reading, writing; Sardar in reading and envelope-making out of scraps of paper that come to us by chance. I call this healthy wealth-production in the name of and for the sake of all.

I wanted to write to you earlier, but somehow or other it escaped me. You will be pleased to learn that at the Ashram the minute of silence has been increased to five minutes. From the letters I was getting from the Ashram I saw that the concentrated labours of the inmates made them high-strung and therefore I felt that it was likely that those who were not used to such concentrated work might not be able to follow the prayer with required serenity. If therefore they had five minutes' unbreakable silence to compose themselves and put themselves in tune with the Infinite, the prayer would be more fruitful. This was introduced now nearly a month ago or a little longer. And Narandas tells me that the silence has done much good.

I have not yet got Charlie's book. I expect it every week. We constantly think of you all at the Settlement[2]. It was a happy time you gave me at Selly Oak. Olive[3] is a great reminder to us all in faithful devotion and utter cheerfulness in spite of frail condition. Mahadev says he does remember the conver-

[1] *Vide* pp. 72-3.

[2] Woodbrooke Settlement, the Quaker centre near Birmingham

[3] Addressee's wife who was an invalid

sation she had with him and many other sweet things at Woodbrooke. We both wish her many more years of loving service.

With love from us all to the whole family,

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat G.N. 1413

90. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

June 23, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

Yours is the first letter I see. The figure of four is written differently in Hindi and in Gujarati—૪ [in Gujarati] and ४ [in Hindi]. I am glad that you are learning verses from the *Gita* by heart. Pronounce the words correctly. And also try to understand the meanings of the verses.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 5775. Also C.W. 2998. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

91. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

June 23, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

I had no fear or anxiety about Kamal's illness. Children often get fever, etc. If they do not fall into the clutches of ill-informed doctors and if the parents do not, through ignorant love, go on loading their stomachs with food, most of them recover without any medicine. Children have the vitality to recover from illnesses and regain strength sooner than grown-up people. You should ask those who used formerly to attend the *Ramayana* classes but do not do so now, the reason why they do not attend them, not with a view to pressing them to attend but in order that, if they point out any defect in your manner of explaining, you may remove it. You may, if you wish, read *Saket*[1] to all who attend. But my suggestion was not that. It was that you should teach select portions from the work to those who had made

[1] An epic in Hindi by Maithilisharan Gupta

some advance in the study of Hindi, so that, when their interest was aroused in it, they might read the work by themselves and bring their difficulties to you.

Anasakti certainly means freedom from attachment to anything concerning oneself and one's relations, but also such deep attachment to the 'other', that is, to Truth, to God, so much so that one must lose oneself in Him, become one with Him. It is because we do not understand this that our enthusiasm wanes and other difficulties arise. You have used the word *nirutsaha*[1] as a noun. Mahadev immediately pointed out to me that it is an adjective. I told him that you had used it as a noun and that you were not likely to make such a mistake But he told me that you had made a mistake. So we consulted a small Hindi dictionary which we have and found that it gives the word as an adjective. Solve this problem.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7503. Also C.W. 4980. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

92. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

June 23, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

Among the Urdu books, are there two volumes by Nadvi? He wrote something in continuation of Shibli's work. Perhaps the author's name on the cover of the book will be Maulana Sulaiman Nadvi.

About fish, I have not made an exception in your favour. Though cod-liver oil is forbidden for us, I have allowed it in the Ashram. Meat and fish are forbidden in the Ashram itself, but they are not forbidden to individuals, cannot be. I at any rate have never forbidden them to anyone. That is why Imam Saheb was permitted to eat them outside the Ashram. Suppose it was Narandas and not you. He has never touched meat, etc., in all his life. But suppose he fell seriously ill and his life was in danger, and he wished to save it by eating meat. I would certainly not prevent him from eating it. Today he knows my views and also what dharma teaches. But the approach of death may change

[1] Meaning 'wanting in enthusiasm'; it is also an abstract noun meaning 'want of enthusiasm' but seldom used as such.

one's ideas. If, at such a time, anyone wishes to eat meat, it would be my dharma not to prevent him from doing so. But suppose it is a child and I have to decide for it I would let it die but not give it meat. Do you know that Ba once passed through such an ordeal? Most probably the incident is described in the *Autobiography*.[1] If you do not know about it, nor does anybody else, write to me and I will narrate it. It was a blessed occasion for both Ba and me Do you now understand my meaning? I don't wish to urge you to eat fish. If by not taking it you are likely to die and you are ready for that, I am ready to let you die. Even if eating fish enables you to live longer, will not the end be death? But, then, dharma is for one who has faith in it and is ready to follow it. Do I follow such dharma in my own life in regard to milk? I do not, though it is clear to me as daylight that one should not drink the milk of any animal. Such principles of dharma however are not meant to be enforced in the lives of others. One should follow them in one's own life. I think I have said enough.

Let me know what your present diet includes, with the quantity of each item. If I feel like suggesting a change, I will.

Your questions about men and women are good.

We should explain to a child any matter about which it shows curiosity, if we know the answer. Otherwise, we should admit our ignorance. If we think the child's question should not be answered, we should restrain it and also tell it not to ask others. In any case, we should never give an evasive reply Children know more about these things than we think they do If we refuse to tell them what they do not know, they learn to satisfy their curiosity in improper ways. We should, however, take that risk and not tell them what we think they ought not to be told There are, of course, very few such things. If they want to know about the obscene act, we should certainly not satisfy their curiosity. Don't mind if they learn the facts in a clandestine manner despite our forbidding it.

If children see birds engaged in the sex-act and want to understand what it means, I would certainly satisfy their curiosity and use the opportunity to teach them the lesson of *brahmacharya*. I would teach them the distinction between man on the one hand and birds and beasts on the other. All the men and women who act in the same manner are, despite their human form, like birds and beasts in that particular respect. There is no condem-

[1] *Vide* Vol XXXIX, pp. 257-60.

nation of anyone in this; it is only a statement of fact We have been granted the human form and our intelligence so that we may rise above our animal nature.

All the facts about menstruation should be explained to a girl who has reached puberty; if a younger girl comes to know about the phenomenon and asks you about it, you may explain to her, too, as many facts as she can understand.

Despite all our precautions, children will not always remain ignorant about these facts. Hence, it would be better to impart that knowledge to them at the proper time. If *brahmacharya* is so frail a thing that a person who knows the facts about sex cannot observe it, we have no use for such *brahmacharya.* The knowledge of these facts should strengthen one's *brahmacharya.* That is what happened in my case.

The motives for seeking or imparting this knowledge differ from person to person One person may seek it in order to gratify his lust. Another may learn the facts without his showing any curiosity about the subject A third person may seek the knowledge in order to calm his passions and to help others.

One should impart this knowledge to others only if one is fit for the job. You should have that ability, and also the confidence that by imparting it to the girls you will not awaken sex-thoughts in them You should remember all the time that you impart this knowledge to the girls in order that they may not be disturbed by such thoughts. If you yourself are not free from them you should take care that they do not disturb you while you are imparting this knowledge to the girls.

The primary aim behind the partnership in life of man and woman as husband and wife is physical enjoyment. Hinduism has tried to teach in its place the practice of self-control, or say, rather, that all religions have done so

If the husband is Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar, so is the wife. A wife is not a servant; she is a friend with equal rights, a partner in dharma. Each is the guru of the other.

A daughter's share should be equal to a son's.

A husband and a wife have equal rights in what either earns. The husband earns with the wife's help, even if she does no more than cook for the family. She is not a servant, but is an equal partner.

A wife has the right to live separately from her husband if he ill-treats her.

The two have equal rights over the children. After the children have grown up, neither of them has any. If the wife is

unfit to exercise her right, she loses it. And so does the husband.

In sum, I do not admit any differences between men and women except those created by Nature which all of us can see. I don't think now that I have left any of your questions on this subject unanswered.

I have the fullest trust in Narandas. When he says that his mind is at peace, I would not believe that it is not so. I have cautioned him again and again. I will harass him no more from this distance. He has great capacity for working in a spirit of non-attachment. Such a person always works much more than another who is attached to his work, and yet seems to be doing no work He is the last person to tire. Really speaking, he should never feel tired, but that is only an ideal. Since you are on the spot, your duty will be different from mine if you observe that his mind is not at peace and that he is deceiving himself. In that case you ought to caution him. I, too, would do that if I were there and found that the evidence of my eyes contradicted what he said. If he disagrees with you and rejects your advice, you should accept what he says, so long as you believe that he is a truthful man. Very often our eyes, too, deceive us If I think that you feel depressed but you contradict me, I must believe you. If I have reason to fear or suspect that you are trying to hide the fact from me, then it would be a different matter. In that case I should not ask you. I would have to seek other means of discovering the truth. The Ashram life, however, cannot go on thus. Truth is the very foundation of that life There even with a good motive one cannot deceive others.

You will read about khadi either in my letter[1] to Narandas or in the letter to children.

Ask Narandas and know from him why he does not try an oil massage

By all means wait for 4th July.[2] But, then, 4th July of which year is a matter for speculation It doesn't matter which year, though. It is much even if only the month and the date are known for certain. We won't have to wait, then, for some other month or date After 4th July has passed, we shall wait in patience for the July of 1933.

BAPU

[1] *Vide* pp 99-106

[2] It had been predicted at that time that Gandhiji would be released on this date.

[PS.]

Vidya seems to require attention. I think she is dull. She does not even know how to ask questions. Look into this.

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N 10291 Also C W 6739 Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

93. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

June 23, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

You should learn how to write a letter. Your questions make no sense. You should show your letters to Premabehn.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C W 9431 Courtesy Ravindra R Patel

94. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

June 23, 1932

Harilal's glass is always red. He goes about drunk and begs from people. He holds out threats to Bali and Manu. Even in this, his motive is to force Bali to give him money. To me also he has written letters holding out very insolent threats. He has threatened that he will file a suit against Bali for control of Manu. I don't feel hurt by all this. I only feel pity for him, and smile too. There are many other people like him. What about them? Shouldn't I feel for them as much as I do for Harilal? They all obey their nature. What else can they do? If we behave in the right manner towards Harilal, he will come round in the end. I think I am not a little responsible for what he is. When he was conceived, I lived in ignorance. The years when he grew up were a time of self-indulgence. I certainly did not drink, but Harilal has made up for that I sought my pleasure only with one woman. Harilal seeks his with many. It is only a difference of degree, not of kind. I should, therefore, atone for my sinful life, and that means self-purification. It is an extremely slow process. . . .[1]

[1] The letter also informed the addressee about the telegram sent to the Governor of U P ; *vide* p 57.

From here, I get certain reforms introduced in the Ashram. I am taking advantage of Narandas's unquestioning faith, his purity of heart, his firmness, his habits of hard work and his competence.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 245

95. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

June 24, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

All or most of you write to me on sheets taken out from exercise books That is not right. It means waste of paper and slovenliness You should use other writing paper.

In permitting Premabehn to eat fish if she wants to do so, I have shown regard for non-violence. I have discussed this in my letter[1] to Premabehn Read it She will come to feel love for fish only if she can think independently. I have observed this in many persons with whom I came into contact. If you are not convinced even after reading this as well as my letter to Premabehn, you may ask me again

Those of you who still feel sleepy during prayers should stand up without feeling shy. Even if they do a few *pranayamas*[2] sitting, the sleepiness would go. One cannot sleep while doing *pranayama*.

I have already told you that I cannot write anything from here for *Madhpudo*[3].

I cherish the ideal of service for the Ashram children when they grow up. God will give suitable field of service to all who have faith in Him, and will also give sufficient strength to each to shine in the work which is given to him God looks after the material and spiritual well-being of His *bhaktas*[4] (the *Gita*, IX. 22, X. 10). You are making slow but steady progress in reading and writing Those of you who are keen can improve their knowledge still further But your intelligence will grow in proportion as you do all physical work with proper attention. A child may learn to read and write and still remain mentally dull. If you do

[1] *Vide* pp. 88-92.

[2] Breathing exercises

[3] Literally, 'beehive'; a handwritten magazine brought out by the Ashram boys and girls

[4] Devotees

not understand this fully, ask me to explain again. Do not feel dissatisfied even in your hearts with the present arrangement. Do this. Use your intelligence in doing everything which you are asked to do. Even cleaning a lavatory requires great intelligence. If you do not know how, ask me.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U /II

96. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

June 24, 1932

CHI. MANU[1],

I got your letter. Your handwriting is improving now. For increasing your weight, you should do exercise in open air and include sufficient milk and ghee in your diet. How much milk do you get? If I can say everything I wish to in a short letter, why should I write a long one?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C W 5759 Courtesy Valji G Desai

97. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

June 24, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

You must know that what is true about the peacock is also true about us.[2] Even men and women who have been beautiful are not a pleasant sight after death, and we cremate them without delay. Hence, we should not be attached to bodies.

There is no hatred in complaining about anyone's lapses in discharging the duties laid down by one's superior. But the person at fault should be tenderly warned.

The expression *sahadharmacharini*[3] basically does mean what you say. But in ordinary language it is used only for a wife.

[1] Son of Valji G Desai

[2] The addressee had stated in her letter that a peacock which had died in the Ashram looked as ugly in death as it had been beautiful in life

[3] Literally, 'partner in dharma', the addressee had asked why the expression could not be applied to a sister also, if she joined her brother in the practice of dharma

When a sister gets married, she does not stay with her brother. The expression *charini* has the implication of life-long adherence. And when a particular meaning comes to be attached to a word, it becomes difficult to change it. Nor is it necessary. You are comfortable remaining alone. Look after your health.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original. C W 9950 Courtesy Shardabehn G Chokhawala

98. A LETTER[1]

June 24, 1932

CHI.,

I got your long letter. According to me, the idea of anybody being possessed by a ghost is nothing but superstition. The countless millions don't feel thus. We don't find such a thing everywhere in the world. But whether we find it or not, you should trust entirely in God He is the magic and the *mantra*[2] and everything else for us. You should, therefore, go on repeating Ramanama. Whatever is decreed for you will happen You should cultivate the strength to bear it. Then let events take what course they will.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bhavnagar Samachar, 17-12-1955

[1] According to the source the letter was addressed to a member of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta's family.

[2] Incantation

99. *HOW TO OBSERVE AHIMSA*[1]

June 25, 1932

Can we kill a snake? Can we use violence against a ruffian attempting to rape a woman? Can we plough a field, though knowing that we kill germs thereby? A votary of ahimsa need not concern himself with such problems. Let them solve themselves when they will. If we lose ourselves in this labyrinth, we shall forget ahimsa.

Those who are sincere in their desire to follow ahimsa will examine their own hearts and look at their neighbours If one finds ill will and hatred in one's heart, one may know that one has not climbed the first step towards the goal of ahimsa. If a person does not observe ahimsa in his relations with his neighbours and his associates, he is thousands of miles away from ahimsa.

A votary of ahimsa, therefore, should ask himself every day when retiring: "Did I speak harshly today to any co-worker? Did I give him inferior khadi and keep better khadi for myself? Did I give him imperfectly baked *rotli* and reserve for myself a fully baked one? Did I shirk my duty and throw the burden on my co-worker? Did I neglect serving the neighbour who was ill today? Did I refuse water to a thirsty passer-by who asked for it? Did I not care even to greet the guest who had arrived? Did I scold a labourer? Did I go on exacting work from him without thinking that he might be tired? Did I goad bullocks with spiked sticks? Did I get angry in the kitchen because the rice was half cooked? " All these are forms of intense violence. If we do not observe ahimsa spontaneously in such daily acts, we shall never learn to observe it in other fields and, if at all we seem to observe it, our ahimsa will be of little or no value. Ahimsa is a great force which is active every moment of our lives. It is felt in our every action and thought. He who takes care of his pennies may rest assured that his pound is safe. But he who does not take care of pennies will lose them, and as for the pound he never had it.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati. M M U /II

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 22/26-6-1932; *vide* pp. 99-106.

100. LETTER TO NATHURAM TRIKAMDAS

June 25, 1932

BHAI NATHURAM,

The use of temples and *choras*[1] is well known. The people would assemble in these places, sing *bhajans*, hold meetings, etc., and that was the purpose which they were intended to serve.

The question whether image-worship is necessary does not arise, since it has always existed and will continue to exist. Every human being is not an image-worshipper, of course.

It may be desirable to make changes in the Vaishnava rituals of worship.

God exists everywhere, and, therefore, He exists in the image too. I believe that destruction of image-worship is impossible

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati. M M U /II

101. LETTER TO BHAU PANSE

June 25, 1932

CHI. BHAU,

One hundred and ninety-eight rounds in half an hour is great speed indeed. The sight must be worth watching.

Anybody who aspires to do service must possess truthfulness, humility, single-minded devotion, etc , and observe *brahmacharya.* If the question, however is what things he must learn to do, it is one which is difficult to answer. One cannot know too many things. The only rule is that one must become totally absorbed in any duty that falls to one's share, or that one should acquire proficiency in one's chosen field of service. It is difficult to say more than this. If the question is, what type of work is the best form of service in the present condition of the country, it is easy to answer and I have often answered it in the past.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati· G N. 6728 Also C W. 4471. Courtesy: Bhau Panse

[1] Public meeting-places in villages

102. LETTER TO NIRMALABEHN GANDHI[1]

June 25, 1932

If the oil from which you put drops into Babu's[2] ears is first boiled with garlic, it will probably be more beneficial.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 255

103. LETTER TO LAKSHMINARAYAN GADODIA

June 25, 1932

BHAI LAKSHMINARAYANJI,

I was very glad to receive your letter.

Interviews are not allowed at present. There is little hope of the restriction being relaxed.

I hope that you both are in good spirits. Your love ever recurs to my mind.

We three are doing well. The time is spent in reading and spinning.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi. G N. 5623

[1] Wife of Ramdas Gandhi

[2] Addressee's son

104. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

June 22/26, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your packet. I examined the account sent by you. I think it is all right. Only, it does not include the information about the total number of hours given to each type of work. Do you wish to keep a record of that? The slips received from the inmates will of course contain the information. If you intend to paste them in a book, we shall be able to get any information we want and whenever we want it If only one person enters all the information, I think he will take at least one hour. Though such an arrangement would make the work very easy, I do think that, if one person dictated and another took down, that would save time, even taking into account the time spent by both. But I can see even from the record of three days that the time spent in this work will not be wasted. If anybody has shown less than nine hours in his slip, it would be better if he also explains in it the reason. A slip will be a mine of information for us. Let this suffice for the present.

This is what I feel about the Giri family: This responsibility has come to us unsought. Dalbahadurgiri's sacrifice was very great. When he died, he asked Krishnamaiyadevi to go and live in the Ashram, so great was the trust that he put in us. Nobody else would have supported her. The Congress there did nothing, or could do nothing. If I had begged from friends on her behalf, I would have got enough help. But I did not think it necessary. The affairs of the Ashram are planned on the assumption that every inmate who works for nine hours a day would earn his food and clothes. If, therefore, Krishnamaiyadevi lived in the Ashram, I calculated that it would not be necessary to beg for help specially on her account. We regard it as our duty to support her only so long as she lives in the Ashram. After all these years, she expressed a desire to leave. Krishnamaiyadevi, Mahavir, and Dharmakumar, all of them kept bad health. Maitri, too, was not very strong either Krishnamaiyadevi, therefore, had sufficient reason for wishing to leave. In deciding whether or not we should pay the expenses of the family, it would be irrelevant and unfair to think of its many shortcomings. Persons who have no-

thing in them besides such shortcomings would not live in the Ashram or would not be able to do so even if they wished. We may give credit to the Ashram for tolerance for the fact that all those who lived in it could do so, but it was no small degree of endurance on their part too. You will come across many who would prefer to starve rather than endure the severity of the Ashram life. But this family bore the difference of language, of the general mode of life and the absence of non-vegetarian food and endured living in what was to them a foreign land. I think we ought not to forget all this. That means that she was justified in leaving the Ashram. If so, we should pay them their expenses. In Darjeeling, if they maintain a separate establishment the expenditure would easily come to Rs. 15 per head. Since they live with her uncle, most probably the latter is saving something from the money given to them. If, however, she emphatically states that that is not so, I would certainly believe her. He must be incurring some expenditure because of them. I had asked her for accounts and for a description of their daily routine. As for the accounts, she said that since they were living with her uncle she simply paid him the amount at the rate of Rs. 15 per head. And it is understandable that, if they live with the uncle, they cannot keep a separate account of their expenses. Probably she keeps something for miscellaneous expenses, but I did not ask her about that. I had assumed that you received detailed letters from her. The last letter which I got from her a few days ago was after an interval of 20 to 25 days and that, too, was only for complaining that she had not received the money. I had asked her to send me a description of their daily routine, but so far I have not received it. Whether or not she keeps such a diary and sends it to me, just now we must pay the money. Their living in Darjeeling will also be a test for them. I don't think they will want to stay there for more than two or three months. I have not fixed any limit in my mind. Personally, I desire that they should stay as long as they wish. I did ask her whether they would like to settle down in Darjeeling permanently. Mahavir was emphatic in his reply: "We belong to the Ashram and wish to live there. We have not come here with the intention of taking up an occupation. If you want us to go back, we would do so immediately. We wish to stay on here for some time longer only because we have come here after many years and because here our health has improved a little. I am however fully conscious of my responsibility. We will not do anything to tar the good name of the Ashram." This was the substance of his reply. In future, if I get similar letters

from him I will remember to send them to you. Maitri's reply in regard to the question of her marriage was equally emphatic. "How can you ask me such a question just now? How can I think of marriage at a time like this? I have not the least desire to get married now, and, even when I wish later to get married, you will have to fix the marriage."[1] Finally, so long as we bear the expenditure of Rs. 100 for Radha, we must bear this expenditure of Rs. 90 too. We cannot here take into account the fact that Radha is the daughter of Maganlal, who was the very soul of the Ashram. If we pay attention to such considerations, we would sink deep into the well of discrimination between person and person. If at all we take that fact into account, it should be to expect Radha to bear more than others do. But I don't have the courage yet to ask Radha or Santok to do so. I believe that mother and daughter are doing what seems right to them and console my mind with that thought. If you see any error in this whole reasoning, please do point it out to me. I have explained the matter at such length in order that my attitude may be clear to you.

Let me also say here what I think about Dudhibehn[2] and Nimu. Dudhibehn probably runs her own kitchen. If so, she must be spending all the money she gets. Valji's mode of life is extremely simple. Dudhibehn has lived in such atmosphere that she would not ask for any help even when she is ill. I would not, therefore, like to tell her anything. Nimu's case, I admit, is in a different category, and you can even raise the matter with her. If you wish, I also may write to her. However, if I write from here that may give her pain Ramdas makes repeated and sincere resolutions to live in a simple style. But he grew up in South Africa and always spent freely. After all, how simple can he make his life? Moreover, Nimu is but a child and she must also have spent freely when she lived under the parental roof. I am certain, therefore, that she makes the Ashram pay for some unnecessary expenses. Mahadev tells me that she takes her meals in the common kitchen. That only means that she eats food worth six or seven rupees—she probably pays for milk and curds from the sixty rupees which she gets. The food for the two children cannot be supplied from the kitchen. The expenditure for their milk and curds is probably met from the sum of sixty rupees which is paid to her. If so, that sum may not be so shockingly large as I

[1] For Gandhiji's reply to Maitri on this subject, *vide* p 37.
[2] Wife of Valji G. Desai

feel it is. However, that can be judged only by a person who knows how she spends the sum. You should get the information from her.

I left the letter incomplete with the last paragraph and busied myself with the meal. Meanwhile I got another letter from you, in which you have replied to my question regarding the hours of work for each type of work. Your explanation helps me to understand many things clearly. The word "Experiments" at the top probably refers to Keshu's experiments. I observe that the largest number of hours is for the spinning *yajna*, and that seems very fitting. The fact shows that when a whole group of people do work, the maximum possible time will be devoted to it and yet it will not be a hardship to anyone. If, therefore, all people live in a spirit of *yajna*, the problems of life would disappear I knew intuitively this value of public *yajna*, but I had never tested my belief with figures.

Records are like the sixth finger. As things are, without that sixth finger everything would come to a standstill. But where everybody observes truth in thought, word and deed, there would be no necessity at all for a department of records, or, if, there was such a department, it would require a minimum of time.

In column 14, the entry is "ill" and in column 20 it is "nursing". What does "ill" mean? With whom does Sharda live now? That is, who is chiefly responsible for her support?

It is certainly a fine thing that the spinning for *yajna* is done in the *dehla*[1] and it would be very good if the practice is kept up. I have no doubt that people will form many useful habits through this practice. I am certainly glad that you are able to give two hours to this work, and I can also understand very well that it must be a time of rest for you. In the same way that prayer should give rest to a person, such *yajna* also should. Only those who feel it to be a burden will try to escape it or do it perfunctorily. I had only one consideration in mind in suggesting to you to limit your *yajna* work to only one hour. I thought that you had to do your other work under excessive pressure and might also not be getting enough time for sleep. If so, you should not look upon the *yajna* work as rest. But since you enjoy perfect peace and don't feel the work to be a burden in any way, I have nothing to say about the matter.

Bhau had suggested that, as they do in Wardha, at Sabarmati too we should use only the *takli* for spinning for *yajna*. I had

[1] Front part of a house

replied to him that I would write to you, but I forgot in my last letter. I am indifferent in this matter. I have not weighed the pros and cons of the suggestion. But you may listen to what Bhau has to say and do what seems best to you.

My arm is not bad, nor can I say that there is distinct improvement. I admitted defeat and started taking milk from today. I have written a detailed letter[1] to Mirabehn about this, which she will get before you get this. It will of course be shown to you, and so I don't repeat everything here. I remained on saltless diet for eleven days. I cannot say positively that the result was good, as is clear enough from the fact that I was forced to start taking milk. But I cannot say, either, that the absence of salt was responsible for the ill effects which followed. I can guess many other causes. But I cannot make here, ought not to make, any experiment which has the slightest risk in it. If I try to take any such step, I would put the officials too in a difficult position. They would not desire to put any restraint on me in such a matter. Hence, if any ill consequence followed, they would be put in a difficult situation. That is why I started taking milk from today, and have decided to eat bread from tomorrow. That means the experiment of saltless diet is over. But such diet has one effect, and, if anybody wishes to try it, the experiment is certainly worth making. I can state it as proved beyond doubt in my case that vegetables dressed without salt have a laxative effect Saltless diet may, therefore, prove beneficial to anybody who suffers from constipation When we were in South Africa, such diet was a rule. There should be no doubt, moreover, that saltless diet for a period is very useful for acquiring self-control. It is certain that Parnerkar's aim has not been fulfilled. Has he calmed down a little now?

Did you post the letter to Savitribehn which I had sent to you?

Mahadev had in fact opposed the suggestion that a Muslim *bhajan* should be recited on a fixed day. And now I have a letter from Chhaganlal, too, opposing it. Their argument is that Muslim *bhajans* are included in the *Bhajanavali*. It should be enough if they are recited occasionally. To fix one *bhajan* to be recited on a fixed day does not seem right. I appreciate the argument. But I still feel in the depth of my heart that there is much force in the suggestion to fix one day for a Muslim *bhajan* which should be the same every week. There is a great difference between

[1] *Vide* pp. 83-5.

our singing such a *bhajan* occasionally when we feel inclined to do so and fixing a certain day for the purpose Why do we recite certain verses every day? For that very reason it seems to me that the feeling that one day in the week at least we establish a bond of unity with Muslims is not altogether meaningless Now do what seems best to all of you there. I have put before you my real conviction in this matter, but I don't press you to accept my suggestion. And if you decide to select a *bhajan*, "*Hai bahare bagh*"[1] is certainly the best, for not only was it dear to Maganlal but we have been singing it from our days in South Africa. It was introduced there at the suggestion of a pure-hearted Muslim youth[2] That youth then passed away, so that for us the song has more in it than its literal meaning. The song was so dear to that youth that, when he came to the line "*Yad kar tu ay Nazir kabronke roz*"[3], he used to substitute his name, Hasan, for Nazir's. Hasan was a frequent visitor to Phœnix. To me he was another son, and we sang that song not once but several times in Phœnix. Hasan played on the piano too, and he often sang it alone to the accompaniment of the piano while we listened. The choice of this *bhajan* is therefore excellent. Its meaning also is excellent.

Is Father Elwin being properly looked after? I feel anxious because he has rather delicate health. There is no need to write to Aluvihari about the suitcase. He will send it at his leisure. I had his address, but I do not seem to have preserved it.

Puratan is in Bhavnagar. The letter will most probably reach him if addressed c/o "Dakshinamurti".

Vallabhbhai draws my attention to the printed words on one corner of the Ashram envelope, "Satyagraha Ashram, Udyog Mandir, Sabarmati". Why both "Satya" and "Udyog"? When I looked at the words, my eyes fell on the letters "B.B.C.I." printed below. Why are they in English? And why at all are they necessary? Assuming that they are necessary, why should we not print "B.B C.I. Railway" in Hindi? This criticism is too late for the envelopes we have in stock. It is meant only for future guidance.

June 24, 1932

Narayanappa has referred to the difficulty experienced in supplying milk to outside customers. In my reply to him, I have asked him to discuss the problem with you. Read that letter.

[1] *Vide* Vol XLIV, p. 436
[2] *Vide* Vol XII, pp 231-5.
[3] "Nazir! remember the day of death."

June 26, 1932

It has been argued that, if one is not permitted to get one's yarn woven into cloth for one's own use, khadi will be costly. Other doubts, too, have been raised. This is how I feel in the matter:

1. The best thing of course is that one should hand over to the Ashram all the yarn spun by oneself and be satisfied with the khadi that one gets as one's share from the stock in the Ashram.

2. Those who are not ready to do this may hand over the yarn spun during the hour set apart for the *yajna* of spinning and keep for themselves the quantity spun at other times

3. The khadi supplied to the inmates of the Ashram should be charged for at the lowest possible rates.

4. The Ashram should always have a stock of khadi which would suit everybody's requirements

5. The khadi woven from the best yarn spun in the Ashram should always be sent out.

6. The inmates of the Ashram should do with as coarse khadi as they can accept and be happy with it. Our idea is that we wear clothes only for protecting our bodies We will, therefore, use the cheapest quality and the minimum possible quantity.

7. If anybody fears that handing over all the yarn spun by himself as his contribution to the *yajna* of spinning will probably kill his enthusiasm for spinning yarn of fine count, let it be killed. Such fear has the terrible implication that the person concerned does the spinning *yajna* as a task Dharma on the contrary tells us that, howsoever indifferently we may spin or cook for ourselves, we should do our best when spinning or cooking for others. Those who do not do that do not really offer *yajna* but merely work. Their *yajna* has no meaning and may be described as hypocrisy. If, therefore, our spinning for *yajna* is not better than or at least as good as our spinning previously, we shall have failed in the test.

Let everybody think over this and then express his or her desire. Every person will act as he wishes. There is no doubt at all that dharma lies in what I have pointed out. If a person is convinced of what I have said, it is his duty to act accordingly. If, however, anybody cannot do so, simply because he has acted differently up to now, let him do as he wishes. I don't wish to create any new difficulty for you. I think I have nothing more to explain.

My arm is all right more or less. I am continuing milk and bread. It is too early yet to say anything about their effect. There is no cause for worry.

I hope you do understand that although I write these letters, I am not certain how long I shall be able to go on. I would not be surprised if, like the visits, they too are stopped suddenly. We should be quite ready for that too. Of course there is no such possibility just now, but one cannot say when the necessity may arise.

I think I have inflicted a fairly long letter on you this time.

BAPU[1]

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U /I Also C W 8235 Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

105. LETTER TO KRISHNABEHN M. KAPADIA

June 28, 1932

CHI. KRISHNA,

I got your and Madhavdas's letters. I hope you keep perfectly fit now. I wish Madhavdas had said something in his letter about his present financial condition. He can write even now. I give complete rest to my arm these days. There is no cause for worry at all. I suppose you know that Manilal, Sushila and Sita, all three of them were caught in the epidemic of virulent fever in Natal. But there was a letter from Sushila after they had recovered, and that means that they must be on their feet again. I get news about Ramdas's health from time to time that it is all right.

Why does Madhavdas remain worried? One never knows when one may lose one's wealth. One should not rejoice when one has it, nor grieve over its loss. One need not feel ashamed of having become poor and remaining so. Really speaking, poverty is man's natural condition There are only a few in the world who are rich.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. MADHAVDAS GOKALDAS KAPADIA
MANORDAS STREET
FORT
BOMBAY

From a microfilm of the Gujarati. M.M U./XXII

[1] For the article "How to Observe Ahimsa", which was sent along with this letter, *vide* p 96.

106. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

June 28, 1932

BHAISHRI KHAMBHATTA,

I got your letter. I was informed about the arrival of the bottle of medicine, but Major Bhandari hesitates to let me use it. He says that it is a camphor liniment described in British Pharmacopoeia and that it smells very strong and may, therefore, injure the skin. If there is any ill effect, he would be held responsible. If he knows the composition of the solution and thinks that the strength of the ingredients is light enough, he may let me use it. That being the position, if you yourself make the oil please let him know its composition and also describe your experience of its effects. He may then let me use it. I pressed him to permit me to use it, but as he mentioned his responsibility I have kept quiet. The pain in the elbow has not increased. I give it complete rest, of course.

Blessings to you bouth from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 7550 Also C W 5025 Courtesy. Tehmina Khambhatta

107. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

June 28, 1932

CHI. RAIHANA,

I got your long letter. The *ghazal* is very fine. I have preserved all your letters to read them again. I wish to prepare a dictionary with their help. The work which you have got in the Oriental Research Institute is very good indeed Raihana will be called a scholar now. She will now fly in the air and all of us will watch her. Tell Pashabhai that all of us were sorry to learn about his misfortune. I hope the girl is all right now. Uncle Sardar has been reading Amir Ali's book with deep interest. Sincere greetings and *vandemataram* from us all to Mother and Father.

I hope Bhai Purohit is all right now. Tell him that Sardar inquires after him. Shardabehn also had informed me that Dr. Sumant was putting on weight [1]

I will not write further today in Gujarati I have said above almost everything I wished to say. I am waiting for Hamida's letter. Regards and *vandemataram* from Sardar and Mahadev.

Blessings and a slap from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu/Gujarati S N 9646

108. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

June 28, 1932

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have received the khaddar, but no letter has been received. Please tell Behenji (sister) that I shall lovingly be using the khaddar Since I wrote[2], I have been studying books on economy. I have read your two pamphlets I can understand (the subject) better than before. But as yet the picture of the whole subject (lit. all things) does not come before me. But I am pursuing it and so I hope to be sufficiently acquainted with the subject. So far I have been reading (Prof.) Shah's book on Banking and Exchange. In this connection any books which may be considered worth reading may be sent. It would be very well if the Reports of the Herschel Committee, Fowler Committee, Babington Smith, Chamberlain and Hilton Young Committees are printed in book form If they are not so printed they may be sent as they are available. Dissenting minutes should also be with them. I also wish to have these Reports over and above the literature you have in mind. If you send also the books our experts have written, there will be sufficient acquaintance with the subject.[3]

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. I. p. 319

[1] The first two paragraphs of the letter are in Urdu

[2] *Vide* p 17.

[3] This and some other letters, reproduced from Bombay Secret Abstracts, are official translations of Gujarati or Hindi originals which are not available.

109. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

June 29, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter here just now. This is just to entrust you with two letters for Damodardas and his wife. They might feel comforted by the letters.

I am well. The milk, bread and fruit are progressing.

More later.

Love.

BAPU

From the original C.W. 6227. Courtesy Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9693

110. LETTER TO KANHAIYALAL[1]

June 29, 1932

BHAI KANHAIYALAL,

(1) One who believes in 'I'.
(2) Freedom from likes and dislikes.
(3) Untruth.
(4) Non-violence.
(5) Freedom for ever from likes and dislikes.
(6) Untruthful conduct.
(7) Non-violence.

BAPU

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 271 Also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 65

[1] The addressee had asked the following questions: 1 Who could be said to be in bondage? 2 What is liberation? 3 What is Hell? 4 What brings about liberation? 5 What is state of liberation? 6 Which is the main gate to Hell? Mahadev Desai did not remember the seventh question

111. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

June 29, 1932

We here have boundless patience, and do not mind if a couple or more years pass [before our effort is crowned with success]. We will only claim so much more interest.[1] . . .

Rajaji seems to be rather prejudiced against American writers.[2] I have read nothing of Hardy or Zola. And I have always felt the loss of not reading the latter. But Upton Sinclair is not a writer to be despised. A propagandist novel cannot be dismissed from an idea that propaganda as such is a fault in it. A propagandist devotes all his powers to the production of his work. He makes no secret of his purpose, and still does not let the interest flag in his story. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is propaganda pure and simple, but its art is inimitable. Sinclair is a great reformer and writes with a view to promoting reforms; yet it is said, all his works are interesting. I propose to read them if I have the time.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 258-60

112. LETTER TO SUMANGAL PRAKASH

June 29, 1932

DEAR SUMANGAL,

Your letter to hand. Your argument with regard to rape seems convincing. In circumstances similar to those in which you believe it right for a woman to take her life, it may be right for a trustee to take his life when somebody tries to rob the property under his care. But the woman and the trustee themselves should think that it is their dharma to do so. You or I have no right to accuse a woman of failing in her dharma if she does not kill herself to prevent herself from being raped.

[1] Gandhiji is referring to Samuel Hoare's speech; he had said that no peace with the Congress was possible so long as it challenged the Government.

[2] After reading *The Wet Parade* Rajagopalachari had expressed his views to Devdas Gandhi.

If, unlike her, the trustee dies while defending the property under his care, we cannot assume, either, that he has done the right thing. We can judge in either case only if we know the mental condition of the person concerned at the time. Though I say this from the point of view of justice, personally I believe that a woman, if she has courage, would be ready to die to save her honour. In discussing this matter with women, I would, therefore, certainly advise them to kill themselves in such circumstances and explain to them that it was easy to take one's life if one wished to do so. I would do this because many women believe that, if there is no man present to protect them or if they have not learnt to use a dagger or a gun, they have no choice but to submit to the evil-doer. I would certainly tell a woman who believes so, that she need not depend upon anybody's weapons to protect her and that her own virtue will protect her. Even if that does not happen, instead of using a dagger or any other weapon she can kill herself. She need not consider herself weak or helpless.

And now concerning hypothetical questions. I had understood your purpose in asking the questions to be exactly what you explain it to be, but I would describe such questions as hypothetical. In some cases questions of this nature may be asked, but it would be better not to ask any. In any case, you should not make it a habit of asking such questions. Anybody who does that commits the same error which a student of geometry who asks his professor to solve riders does. Such a student will never learn geometry well. That will also be the fate of a person who seeks the solutions of problems arising out of a principle from other people. Apart from this, however, there is a great flaw in the very nature of questions raised on the basis of ethical principles, namely, we never come across in life an instance exactly similar to the one we had imagined. If there is ever so slight a difference between the hypothetical case and the actual one, the answers in the two cases are likely to be entirely different. That is why I have cautioned you that, if you are not confronted with a problem relating to an actual instance which you have come across, you should not make it a habit to seek from me solutions of hypothetical problems in order to be prepared for such eventualities. If you do that, my answers to hypothetical questions will, instead of helping you in an emergency, prevent you from finding the right solution. The mind of such a person becomes incapable of original thinking The better thing would be to grasp the basic principle thoroughly and to assimi-

late it, and not to mind if, in applying it in solving your problems or those of other members in your family, you make mistakes. You will learn from such mistakes. But you should not approach others, even those who understand the principle better than you do, to seek solutions of hypothetical problems in order to prepare yourself to meet them when they arise. Such a procedure destroys one's self-confidence. The author of the *Gita* seems to have written verse 10 of Chapter X because he knew this from experience. Doesn't the Lord tell us in that verse that "to these, ever in tune with Me, worshipping Me with affectionate devotion, I give the power of selfless action, whereby they come to Me." If you substitute "Truth" for "God" in this sentence, the meaning will be perfectly clear. I hope you now understand what I meant to say. I do not mind your hypothetical questions, but I fear that I may do you harm by encouraging you to put such questions. I am sure at any rate that I would not be helping you. Take, for instance, your question regarding rape. Though I may give a definite reply now to your question regarding a hypothetical instance, I would give quite a different reply if an instance like that actually occurred, and support it with convincing reasons. It is also very possible that I would be able to point out a difference between the hypothetical case and the actual incident. I write all this from experience about co-workers. I will stop here now.

I am glad to learn that your health has improved.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp 268-70, and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. II, pp 75-9

113. A LETTER[1]

June 29, 1932

Why should you wish to commit suicide? So far as I know, you have not deceived anyone. And since you have resolved never to speculate in future, that chapter is closed. Even if you have deceived anybody, that is no reason for committing suicide. A person who confesses that he has deceived people is better than others who deceive but who are not found out or than those who have not been put in circumstances in which they would feel tempted to deceive. You have, therefore, no reason for committing suicide. And now about the problem of debt. If you hand over everything you have to your creditors, your responsibility will be over. If the creditors declare you insolvent, let them do so. There is nothing to be ashamed of even in that. Manliness lies in facing whatever happens. I have already written to you and told you how you may live now. Both of you should go and live in the Ashram. Do not feel the slightest hesitation in doing so. Do not be proud and think that, now that you are a poor man, you cannot go to a place where you often used to go in the days of your prosperity. The Ashram exists for good people. Write to me from time to time. Seek Mirabehn's company for what comfort it can give you. Know that good company is like a philosopher's stone and be near her.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p 258

114. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

June 30, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

Being anxious to send to Damodardas and his wife a comforting letter, I wrote at once yesterday so as to catch the post. I hope you got the two letters and gave them to the friends. It is sad that loss of wealth should so affect people.

[1] It is likely that this was addressed to Damodardas and his wife, *vide* the following item and "Letter to Mirabehn", p. 109

Where are your Urdu-English and English-Urdu dictionaries? I need them badly. My Urdu studies are growing. I am reading fairly extensively. I must, therefore, enrich my Urdu collection of books. There are several books at the Ashram. I propose to send for them.

There is nothing to report just now about my health.

The improvement you notice in your system is certainly very encouraging. The increase in milk and fruit was necessary.

I was glad Verrier was able to go to England after all. The visit must renew his shattered body. And his mother and sister will be overjoyed to have him in their midst.

There is no reply to my letter[1] about you. There may be no reply!

It is a good thing Shantabai is giving some time regularly to spinning.

Tilak should take all the rest he may need He must build up his body.

Noorbanu does not take enough exercise. Do coax her to take long walks. And if you can persuade her to go without salt and ghee for a month, she will lose much of her superfluous fat.

For the cadence of Ramanama, you should get hold of Panditji when he passes through Bombay. I think he could recommend one of his fellow-teachers of the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya if you wrote to him. You would learn it in half an hour's time.

Who are the principal members of the International Fellowship now?

You will send my love to all the friends in Europe, and Mahadev's too, and to the Oxford uncle and his wife, and kisses to the beautiful baby. I can never forget that visit, the quiet home and the very beautiful chapel attached to it.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original. C W. 6228 Courtesy Mirabehn Also G N 9694

[1] Presumably "Letter to E. E. Doyle", p. 58.

115. LETTER TO MRS. LINDSAY[1]

June 30, 1932

You have beaten me. For the past four weeks or more I have been thinking of writing to you and I could not. And now your most welcome letter giving me a budget of family news has come. Thank you for it. What I wanted to say to you was that in everything I have done, I have asked myself how you would take it. Such was the hold your appealing eyes had on me when you spoke to me at that meeting under Prof. Thomson's roof. And then came those never-to-be-forgotten talks under your own roof when you had received me as one of the family. Mahadev is with me. We often talk of all the friends we met in Oxford. Our love to all of you.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p 263

116. LETTER TO THE PRIVATS[2]

June 30, 1932

MY DEAR BHAKTI AND ANAND,

It was a great delight to hear from you both and to know that you were doing so well. I had one postcard from Anand whilst you were travelling. Nothing beyond it. Of course you remember Sardar Vallabhbhai. He and Mahadev are with me. We are all keeping well and trying to make ourselves useful. Mahadev and I give fair time to spinning and studying. Sardar produces wealth by making envelopes from waste brown paper and the like. This will be enclosed in one such envelope.

I do hope you did not find the Indian climate too trying for you.

[1] Wife of Dr. A D Lindsay, Master of Balliol College, Oxford

[2] A Swiss couple, Gandhiji called them Anand and Bhakti

I wonder if you often see the Rollands. When you do please give our love to them and accept it for yourselves.

Yours,
BAPU

PROF. E. PRIVAT
LA CHAUMIERE AVENUE
SWITZERLAND

From a photostat G N 8792

117. LETTER TO BHAU PANSE

June 30, 1932

CHI. BHAU,

Jamnalalji has already sent me three copies of Vinoba's *Gitai*[1]. Your constipation must be cured. If necessary, consult Dr Talwalkar about it. Its effect may not be felt much now, but it is bound to become serious in future. I will suggest one remedy which has helped me. You may try it for two or three days and, if it does not work, give it up Eat twice or thrice a day cooked *tandalja*[2] or *palak*[3] leaves—eat nothing else. This is likely to help you. As soon as you pass stools normally, resume your normal food. The immediate, and unfailing, remedy for migraine is the application of a mud-pack. Bind it when retiring. If the headache still occurs on the next day, apply the pack again and lie down.

I think that the image of the Lord reclining on the Shesha[4] has some mystic significance and does not contradict the idea of his being ceaselessly active. The word *atandrita* in that verse[5] can only mean doing everything with perfect vigilance and without lethargy. It does not mean working all the twenty-four hours of the day. This can be said about God's manner of working as contrasted with that of unenlightened human beings, and the verse only draws such a contrast. In truth, however, God is neither awake nor asleep, He neither does anything nor does nothing.

[1] Literally, 'Mother *Gita*', Vinoba Bhave's metrical Marathi rendering of the *Gita*

[2] Amaranth

[3] Spinach

[4] A serpent with a thousand heads which is the couch and canopy of Lord Vishnu

[5] Probably *Bhagavad Gita*, III. 23

It is, therefore, not possible to compare Him with anything. After saying this, I may add that this is how I interpret the image of the Lord reclining on Shesha: that God is so perfectly free from fear that He can sleep soundly even with His head on the body of a snake. I interpret it thus for my own satisfaction and the meaning gives me strength. That is, if we are filled with perfect ahimsa, we would not feel the slightest fear even in the presence of a snake and, more than that, the snake would have no fear of us.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 6732. Also C.W 4475 Courtesy Bhau Panse

118. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

June 30, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

I got your letter. I do not see any harm in your encouraging the girls to write to me in Hindi and correcting their language. Only see that, instead of constructing the sentences themselves, they do not write them down as you speak them. They themselves should write the letters first. Otherwise, only their handwriting will improve and their language will not improve. The questions also should be their own. There is no rule that they must ask questions. They should describe what new things they have learnt during the week, what they have observed, what made them happy or unhappy, or things which happened during the week or have left an impression on their minds. This will mean more work for you, but you can teach them to write about these things even during their Hindi lessons. I also see that Pushpa has begun to take interest in her work and is eager to make progress.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 7504. Also C.W. 4981. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

119. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

June 30, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I regard you as being three years old.[1] What you say is correct. When I brought you along with me from Bombay, I was doubtful whether you would continue in the Ashram, though not as much as you believe I was. For you had kept your promise, and I do not feel doubtful about anyone who keeps his or her promise. I do not think there was sarcasm in my words, but I was not sure that you would continue as long as you have done. I recollect this to be the state of my mind then. I certainly wish that you should spend your whole life there as you have spent three years and that through deliberate resolution, not aimlessly, with the firm conviction that you belong to the Ashram and the Ashram belongs to you. But, of course, I cannot force you to do this. I may only wish that you should do so. You cannot make up your mind to stay on unless you sincerely feel that the Ashram belongs to you. I have merely expressed my wish.

This refers to your second birth in the Ashram. The other birthday falls on July 13 and you should get this letter about the 8th. You have my blessings, of course. May your highest aspirations be fulfilled! I have no doubt that they will be, since you are alert and striving with that aim. You should also have sufficiently long life and good health for that purpose. I am sure you will have them too. But, ultimately, none of these things depends on you or me. We trust everything to Him. He may do as He wills. And whatever He does will be for the best.

Send to me your account for the 13th. Tell me what resolution you make on that day. I suppose you know that I advise everyone to make a good resolution on his or her birthday.

Put no trust in the predictions of astrologers. Do not take any interest in the matter at all. Even if such predictions come true, there is no benefit in knowing them. The harm is plain.

It is hot there. But here it is very cool. There has not been much rain, though.

[1] The addressee wanted to be regarded as only three years old since she considered her coming to the Ashram as her new birth.

Send to me soon the following Urdu books—as many biographies of the Prophet as you can find, the two parts of *Asva-e-Saheba*, *Khulfa-e-Rashdin* and the English-Urdu and Urdu-English dictionary. If you can send them to Dahyabhai in Bombay, he will bring them here on Saturday.

All the buildings should be cleaned regularly on fixed days. The luggage should be lifted and the spot cleaned. You must find the necessary time for this.

It is our duty to try to raise to perfection whatever we find imperfect, whether a person or a society or an institution. If on the whole we find more shortcomings than good points, our duty is to leave the person or the thing, non-co-operate with him or it. This is a universal principle and I asked you to follow it. In doing so, I did not wish to advise you to leave the Ashram, or anything else. I only explained to you what is accepted as everyone's moral duty in certain circumstances.

In Bengal, hundreds of sheep and goats are slaughtered in broad daylight every day and offered as sacrifice to the Goddess Durga in Calcutta. I pray to God to make me a fit instrument for stopping this. Didn't you know this?[1]

I knew that men often describe themselves as *gopis*[2]. If this is done purely through *bhakti*, I see nothing wrong in it. Before God all of us are the weaker sex.

When we have swaraj, men will certainly come forward to climb the top of the Himalayas or discover the North Pole. I do believe that knowledge of the physical sciences is useful.

My experiments in diet have done me no harm. They have lasted for periods ranging between seven days and eight years.

Dhurandhar has gone to Nasik.

"Monodiet" is certainly beneficial.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N 10292. Also C W. 6740. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

[1] The addressee had asked which particular prayer Gandhiji addressed to God every day.

[2] The cowherd maidens with whom Krishna sported in his boyhood

120. LETTER TO SHAMAL R. RAVAL

July 1, 1932

CHI. SHAMAL,

Anasuyabehn meets everybody who wants to see her. Ask her to advise you and guide you. You do right in asking my advice. Who makes fun of you? You can meditate on God by going on repeating His name. The best way of worshipping God is to see Him in all creatures and serve them lovingly. Why are you unhappy in the Ashram? Explain the cause, whatever it is, to Narandasbhai. In any case write to me and tell me everything fully.

BAPU

S. R. RAVAL

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 3143. Also C.W. 2878. Courtesy: Shamal R. Raval

121. LETTER TO KUSUMBEHN DESAI

July 1, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

Some of your letters are no letters at all. For instance the last letter. If you cannot think of anything to write about, it would be better not to write at all. It is a weakness in you that you cannot think of anything to write about, but writing a letter which is almost a blank sheet of paper does not make up that weakness but confirms it.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1841

122. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

July 1, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

This time your handwriting was bad. You should always make each letter as distinct as in print.

As regards the selection of land, see what I had written in my letter either to Mangala or Sharda, and then if there is anything you wish to ask me, you may do so.

Why does Mohan not write to me regularly?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5776. Also C.W. 2999. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

123. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

July 1, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

It is not right that Premabehn should suggest the questions which you ask. The questions must be of interest to you, and you should be eager to know their answers. They should be such as nobody there can answer. Questions should not be asked for the sake of asking them. Your letters should contain a report of the work done during the week. Work includes study also.

Now the questions:

For the past many years my life has come to be exclusively devoted to public work.

Pure food is that which involves the minimum destruction of life and which is taken merely for the sustenance of the body.

The motive behind pilgrimage should always be religious. But religious actions also serve practical ends. Religion ought not to be—cannot be—antagonistic to true practical ends.

The chief characteristic of virtuous life is *sat*, i.e., truth.

In your letters your grammar and spellings must be correct.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II

124. LETTER TO BABALBHAI MEHTA

July 1, 1932

CHI. BABALBHAI,

Bhakti means silent [and continuous] repetition of God's name in one's heart. God means the One Essence manifested as all living creatures. Hence the *bhakta* is a person who serves all living creatures through love of God. You have correctly interpreted the meaning of the injunction: "Do everything as sacrifice to me".[1]

Your interpretation of the other verse, too, is correct. For stilling the movements of the *chitta*[2], observance of the *yama-niyamas*[3] is the chief thing. The same idea is expressed in two different ways: "Do everything as sacrifice to me" and "Renounce the fruits of action." People of a certain nature will understand the first easily and people of another type will understand the second easily.

The condition of my elbow is not as serious as you seem to think it is. The only thing is that it pains when I use the arm in a particular manner. Kakasaheb's health is definitely improving. Do not worry if you feel when reading the *Gita* that your life is contrary to the teaching of every verse. Instead, you should try to overcome your shortcomings patiently but with determination, no matter even if there is a whole heap of them, as big as a hill. As you go on trying, a day will come when all of them will disappear together. If, however, looking at the hill you get discouraged and stop trying, the hill will become bigger and bigger.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9450

125. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

July 1, 1932

DEAR PANDITJI,

I had never heard the name Yoga[4] before. What is her age? How far has she studied? The supervision of the Vidyapith books

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, XII. 10

[2] Mind-stuff

[3] Rules and regulations of conduct for a spiritual aspirant

[4] Address's niece

has come to our hands in time. Now take good care of them. Mahadev spins more than 200 rounds of yarn of 45 counts per hour. The children's problem is our own. I will discuss it in my letter to Narandas.[1] Read it. I have written to Narandas in regard to silent prayers in the morning.[2] If the silent prayers in the morning are held intelligently it would be advantageous. Though I had it in mind only for the evening. But I do not write here more. See what I have written to Narandas. I have suggested to Mirabehn that if, instead of repeating the refrain *Raghupati Raghava Rajaram*, etc., only Ram Ram Ram . . . is repeated in ascending and descending notes, then the refrain could be taken up briskly and it would be very good for the newcomers.[3] But who will teach her this? If you have anybody in view in Bombay please write to him to go and teach her. Have you followed?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C.W. 228. Courtesy Lakshmibehn N. Khare

126. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA[4]

July 1, 1932

. . . As you follow whole-heartedly the remedy I have suggested, you will get more and more peace. What you have already read will have an invisible effect on you and it will be amazing. Live as if you had never read anything. Whatever you have digested and assimilated will of itself bear fruit as action.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 270-1 and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 57

[1]&[2] *Vide* pp. 146-51.
[3] *Vide* p. 84.
[4] *Vide* also "Letter to Bhagwanji P. Pandya", p. 63.

127. LETTER TO SWAMI ANAND

July 1, 1932

BHAI ANANDANAND[1],

You made me wait for a long time. Sardar asked me several times why your letter was still not received. We knew that it was not received. But what can you do? Even if the reason is known, one does hope for a thing which one ardently desires. You will receive this letter or it will come back to me.[2] Many of those who have come in contact with me had similar experience about separation as you have got, though I am near you.[3] You are to draw as much satisfaction therefrom as you can. Kallenbach[4] had laid down a fine standard. His experience was that when he first came in contact with me, he met me daily and took as much of my time as he could; when we came in very close contact and began to live together he had hardly time to talk with me though we lived, ate and slept together. While returning home from office, there were always some people talking with us. So, that became a regular matter of quarrel between us. He applied the rule of three and came to the conclusion that it was his experience that the more one came into contact with me, the more he remained away from me. I supported his statement and added, "You have come so near me because you have understood me. Hence you have no right to take my time now nor have I the right to spare time for you, leaving aside those who have yet to know me." And on this understanding our affairs went on. Is it not that there is some truth underlying such experience, viz., that in the case of associates who are closely united with one another there remains nothing to make inquiries about? If they do so they may be said to fail to that extent in their general duty. And if this is true, associates like you who

[1] Swami Anandanand, manager of the Navajivan Press

[2] What follows is collated with the Gujarati in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I

[3] The addressee had stated in his letter that he would not commit the crime of taking up Gandhiji's time when he was free, and was not lucky enough to be his companion in jail. He could, therefore, never hope to be able to live with Gandhiji and have an opportunity of discussing things personally with him.

[4] Hermann Kallenbach, a German architect; devoted friend and co-worker of Gandhiji in South Africa

are near, though living at a distance, have no reason to feel sorrowful about.[1] I did know that your weight had gone down, but I had no fears about your health. The Magan spinning-wheel is not a modified or improved form of the Gandiva wheel. It is a distinct, useful and excellent discovery made by Prabhudas[2]. Its wheel can be worked by foot instead of by hand, and so both the hands being free, two spindles can be worked simultaneously. Hence he who becomes an expert in working it can without doubt spin one and a half times, if not double, of what he can do on a one-spindle wheel. I did want to work the wheel to satisfy Prabhudas. In the mean time the doctors here prohibited me from drawing the yarn or working the wheel with the left hand. So, there was a twofold reason for me to work the Prabhudas wheel. As Maganlal encouraged the making of that wheel and contributed largely to the scientific side of it, it has been named *Magan Rentio*. I am spinning on it at present. The speed has reached about 140 rounds. It will still go up. From the above remarks, I hope you have understood that I have been spinning only on one spindle because, giving complete rest to the left hand, I draw the thread with the right.

The yarn is of 19 counts. There is nothing to fear about the hand. When it is used in doing a particular kind of work, the elbow is aching and doctors persistently believe that the complaint is not due to any internal cause, but it is due to an external cause, viz., due to the drawing of threads daily. So, they are of the opinion that by giving rest to the muscles the complaint will subside by itself. Despite this, that part is treated by [ultra-]violet rays. Hence there is no cause for anxiety. My weight has failed to go up to 112 lb. It has not exceeded 106½ lb. I have been taking milk for the last ten days under pressure from the Superintendent. I am yet unable to say that I have benefited by it. My present weight is 104 lb. Sardar is doing well. His weight may be said to be the same as it was when he came (here). It can be said that the nose complaint is under slight control. The weight of Mahadev is also good. His health is excellent. Mahadev had been spinning 840 yards of yarn of No. 45 to 50 up to the day before yesterday. He spent about five hours daily on it. As he also felt the effects of exertion, he spins half the amount of yarn for the last two days and is do-

[1] The following is reproduced from the English rendering of the letter available in Bombay Secret Abstracts

[2] Prabhudas Gandhi, eldest son of Chhaganlal Gandhi

ing carding work, of course, in addition. I spin 200 yards of yarn. I study Urdu, astronomy and books on currency and write the history of the Ashram when I get time. Mahadev is reading on stray subjects He has, of course, in addition, to write for me. Now the spinning having been reduced, he may, perhaps, begin to write something. Sardar produces wealth from dust, in other words, he has been making envelopes from waste-paper of *badami*[1] and other colours. If I were to give you a description of the papers, you will laugh a lot. To whomsoever we have to write a letter, we make use of these envelopes. As we do not differentiate between Government money and ours, we save every cowry where possible. The making of envelopes is undoubtedly an addition to the wealth of India or that of the world, however small it may be. Keeping in mind that everything that is used as Government property is our property, we make use of it. Sardar is spending time also in reading and has thought of acquiring a working knowledge of Sanskrit. He has also called for the *Sanskrit Pathamala* by Satavlekar[2] and intends side by side to be well versed in Hindi too. This is the account of our work. Our family consists of a cat and her two kittens. Though their names are not entered in the history ticket, they share a little of milk, etc.[3]

I have completed reading Rolland's books on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. I always had reverence for Ramakrishna. I had read little about him. But as I had heard several things about him from his devotees, that feeling had sprung up. I cannot say that Rolland's books have added to it. In fact both the books of Rolland are meant for Westerners. I will not say that we can derive nothing from these books. But I for one have derived very little benefit. The things which had influenced me are also to be found in Rolland's books. The additional matter which it contains has not added to the impression. It did not appear to me that Vivekananda was as much a devotee as Ramakrishna. Vivekananda's love was great. He was full of feeling and used to be carried away by it. It was like the golden covering for his knowledge.[4] The distinction which he made between religion and politics was not correct. But it is no use criticizing such a great man and once we let loose ourselves we can criti-

[1] Brown

[2] 1866-1968, renowned scholar and author of several books in Sanskrit

[3] The following paragraph has been collated with the Gujarati in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*.

[4] cf. *Ishopanishad*, 15

cize anyone whom we wish to. Our duty lies in learning anything we can from [the lives of] such persons. As Tulsidas's couplet[1] has produced a deep impression on my life, I do not like to criticize. But as I know that you will wish to know if I have to offer anything by way of criticism, I have written this much. I have no doubt that Vivekananda rendered great service. We have clearly seen that he gave his life for what he considered to be the truth. When I went to see the Belur Math in 1901, I desired to see Vivekananda also. But the Swami of the Math informed me that he was ill and resided in the city and no one could see him. I was then disappointed. My devotion had saved me from many difficulties. At that time there was not a single notable person whom I did not run up to see with feelings of respect and I used to go to most of the places on foot on the long roads in Calcutta. Devotion inspired all this. I had no desire to save money though this is also in my nature.[2]

Respects from all three of us to Abdulla Sheth, Jabir Ali, Soman, Gokulbhai, Vishwanath, and all others. I hope you will admit now that I have written at greater length than you might have wished.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp. 265-7 and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. II, pp. 133-41

128. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

July 1, 1932

DEAR KISHORELAL,

I was waiting for your letter. I do not wish you to write to me, making use of the occasion when it is necessary for you to write to anybody else. But do write to [me] when you can easily do so. Devdas was suffering from mild typhoid. But now he is entirely cured. I receive letters from him. He was taken good

[1] "The Lord of creation has made all things in this world, animate and inanimate, an admixture of good and evil. But a good man selects the good and rejects the evil even as the fabled swan is said to help himself to milk leaving out water."

[2] The following is from the English rendering available in Bombay Secret Abstracts

care of. He is getting books to read. Ramdas is here and is all right. Chhaganlal, Surendraji, Darbari and several others are with him. Qureshi is also there. Ramniklal, Kanti, Surendra, Vithal, Fulchand, Diwan Master and several others are in Visapur jail. Jamnalal, Pyarelal, Vinoba, etc., are in Dhulia jail. There the *Gita* is being studied with great enthusiasm. Manilal, Sushila, Sita, Pragji all had an attack of the poisonous fever prevailing in Natal. But all have been saved. Pragji is not willing to undertake responsibility[1]. So Manilal is engaged and it seems that he will not come. Gangabehn, Tara, Mahalakshmi, Rama, Gangabehn Jhaveri, Nanibehn, Bhaktibehn, Shanta, Lilavati Asar, etc., are here. As doctors believe that my hand complaint is due to exertion, I have been giving rest to it. The complaint is not permanent. It recurs when a particular kind of work is done. As an experiment, it is given diathermy; but the doctors here believe that rest is the only remedy for that part of the hand. It is not necessary even to direct a thought over it. I have been taking milk nearly for the last ten days. My weight is 104 lb. The reason for taking milk is that the Superintendent here is pressing for it. I did not think that it was essential. But as the weight was going down, I gave up my determination. I am working Prabhudas's spinning-wheel by foot and am drawing the thread with the right hand. It is working well. Sardar and Mahadev are doing well. The nose complaint of Sardar is lying dormant for the present. The complaint in the leg-bone from which Mahadev was suffering was completely cured in a few days after he came here. Mahadev spins yarn of 40/50 counts. He is doing some carding work and reading, of course, in addition to what he has to write for me. Sardar is reading and adding to the wealth of the world by making envelopes from useless *badami* paper. As we do not differentiate between the Government and other property, we hold the so-called Government property to be ours and make a careful use of everything. Such troubles as you infer should not arise from the working of the Gandiva spinning-wheel. Its wheel should work without the least trouble. It requires only a gentle push. But if you believe that though the wheel of the Gandiva spinning-wheel you have been using is turning very lightly, yet your wrist is aching, then you should use a spinning-wheel with a perpendicular wheel even for the sake of removing your doubt. That your weight is increasing can indeed be regarded as good news. The diagnosis

[1] Of the press; *vide* p. 60.

of the doctor about the asthma may be correct and if two grains of quinine every day cures the trouble, it should be regarded to be very good.

I had written on prayers[1] and on a subject like that of the regulations to be observed by a satyagrahi[2]; but not on this subject. However, I have not got a copy of the same. But as you refer to it, I shall call for it and correct errors in it and send it to you, if possible. It will not be regarded, I feel confident, as a letter. There is indeed pressure of work in the Ashram. Shankarbhai[3] writes the Ashram letter when he gets leisure. Several essential things are left out in it. I have kept up the idea of reading your book carefully, but believing that I have ample time I do not turn to it, leaving aside what I have been reading at present. You have done well in going through the *Gita* again. If you send it here, I will get it.[4] I do not desire to recommend you to read anything special.[5] I do not believe that you have read less. My own reading can indeed be regarded as being quite odd. I have been reading Urdu at present. As my ignorance on currency is unpardonable, I have been making some progress in the subject. The spirit of service lies behind both of these, and submitting to this spirit, though I can be regarded to be on the eve of death, I aspire to have a good knowledge of Tamil which has been left incomplete; and from this point of view I had begun to read Bengali and Marathi, and I shall not be surprised if I plunge into their study if a good time is passed here If your mind is working in any such direction and if you desire to know any new language, do not fail to do so We had this aspiration about languages when the Ashram was established. It has not weakened at all so far as I am concerned. But I do not desire to draw you under this temptation. The one necessity which I see for all of us is that we should think on what we have read, digest it and make it a feature of our life. From this viewpoint I have gone even to the length of advising Bhagwanji[6] to give up (the reading of) *Gita* and writings of Raichandbhai and to remain engaged in his own work and think over it alone, because I found that he had crammed much from the *Anasakti-*

[1] *Vide* pp 68-9

[2] *Vide* Vol XLIX, pp 386-8.

[3] Shankarbhai Bhikhabhai Patel

[4] What follows has been collated with the Gujarati in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*

[5] The addressee had requested Gandhiji to suggest what he should read in addition to what he had read already.

[6] *Vide* pp 63 and 123

yoga and the writings of Raichandbhai, but he was unable to make the right use of all these. His heart, I believe, is clean, but his intellect defeats him, he indulges in various thoughts and at last he remains where he is. My writing appears to have produced a deep effect on him and he is appeased. Whatever may be the result of this advice, it has become clear to me from several experiences that the line of thought behind it is quite correct. Accordingly I cannot think of recommending the reading of religious books to persons like you.[1] I agree to a certain extent with the realization by you of defects in you. I have, however, marked many times that you are in the habit of entering into discussions. You appear to have taken an exaggerated view of this defect in your letter. I see no reason for it. But I am, indeed, of opinion that much of the discussion can be curtailed. This does not mean that you should not reply to what one asks you. If one does not ask a man like you, whom will one ask? It is one thing to give to an inquisitive [man] what one can out of what one has, and to enter into discussion is quite a different matter. Do not be confused by interpreting these observations of mine in an unwarranted manner. Do not uselessly reprove yourself also after deep introspection. My support is not intended to magnify the defects you have seen, but is meant to explain their proportion. In order to live with ease with persons of queer nature, silence is indeed greatly essential. We must understand that we have not known religion until we are able to maintain calmness though we live in society.

Imitation of Christ is a treasure of experiences of a real man. So it cannot but produce effect. I will tell you how I was induced to study the sky. When I accidentally found that it had become for me a means of seeing God, I looked at it at once. Kaka was with me. He induced me much. But my mind turned me aside from it. 'When I got leisure from other work I would do it' was the feeling. In 1922 when I was here, I had collected books on the subject. At that time also, I was deferring this study for one reason or another. Shankerlal gradually studied the subject himself. I was induced several times to see Cassiopeia. After seeing a little I engaged myself again in my work.[2] But at this time thoughts came to me suddenly that the sight of the sky was equivalent to a valuable religious association. The stars were silently talking with us. I do not wish to dilate upon all these thoughts. In short what

[1] The following has been reproduced from the English rendering of the letter available in Bombay Secret Abstracts.

[2] The two sentences which follow have been collated with the Gujarati in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*.

I want to say is that when everything becomes a religious lesson for me, then only I dive into it and now I cannot come out of it.

As much time has passed, I do not lengthen the letter now. If this letter will reach you safely, I will write again further.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, pp 123-31 and *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p 267

129. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

July 1, 1932

DEAR MANGALA,

A letter should not be written on a page torn from a note-book.[1]

To become a cipher means to remain last in receiving a good thing, to serve everybody, to expect nothing in return and to be first in suffering inconveniences. Anybody who lives like a cipher in this manner is bound to remain devoted to his or her duty.

There must be love in our mutual dealings. It is good that you have taken up a responsibility. Discharge it fully. Who stays with Kamu? Does she ever write a letter? Send (me) her address.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 270 and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No (800), p 51

130. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

July 1, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

Find out the meaning of "like a cipher" from the letter to Mangala[2] There has been no rain here. I believe I am not being partial. If Bawa Muldas really said what he is supposed to have

[1] The paragraph which follows has been collated with the Gujarati in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

said, it was wrong.[1] Thereby, even the widow has been wronged. One should not tell a lie even to relieve someone from misery. That surely is no way of ending misery.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9952. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

131. LETTER TO JEKOR

July 1, 1932

DEAR JEKOR,

Those who are released go back. This is a useless question. When there is nothing specially to ask, nothing should be asked. But write an account of your work every week. (Your) handwriting is good but there is much scope for improvement yet.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 53

132. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

July 1, 1932

DEAR PUSHPA,

Received your letter. Sultan means a king. He can do much. But if he does not worship God his whole life and begins to do so in old age, that cannot be done. There is no reason why you should [not] write a letter in Hindi. It is proper that you do. But my Hindi may not be correct, and so if I write in Hindi it may be a wrong lesson.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800 (40)(3), Pt. II, p. 53

[1] The addressee had asked: "Bawa Muldas saved the widow by describing her as his wife. Was it right? Can one speak a lie to save a widow?"

133. LETTER TO ANANDI

July 1, 1932

DEAR ANANDI,

You have been spoiling your handwriting. This is not good. Do you write letters to Bai? How do you spend your whole day?

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800 (40)(3), Pt. II, p. 53

134. LETTER TO INDU N. PAREKH

July 1, 1932

DEAR INDU,

Your weight must be said to have been much reduced. For the present leave off prayers. In the morning, sleep as long as you can. Increase the proportion of milk and reduce that of any other thing you like. Then see if the weight increases or not. It is enough that what you can do, you should do with attention and interest. Never mind if less (work) is done for the present.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800 (40)(3), Pt. II, p. 55

135. LETTER TO MADHAVLAL

July 1, 1932

DEAR MADHAVLAL,

I was waiting for your letter. It is good news that you are keeping good health. Do not fast for having broken the vow of spinning Do see that there is no break again. And so there must be *takli* introduced along with it. Under the new method of plying the *takli* introduced in the Ashram some have already been turning out 300 yards per hour. There should be no break in the prayers. Never mind if (they are offered) late. It would

be better if it is not late. Even if it is late it should not be that the prayers are not offered [at all]. Food can be given up but not the prayers. In these circumstances I regard (the absence) of a diary to be pardonable. Ahimsa can be attained only by strict perseverance.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800 (40)(3), Pt II, p 55

136. LETTER TO PUNJABHAI H. SHAH

July 1, 1932

DEAR PUNJABHAI,

Received your letter. Go on renouncing the liking for the body so that when it falls, you will experience complete peace.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 59

137. LETTER TO S. D. SATAVLEKAR

July 1, 1932

BHAI SHRI SATAVLEKARJI,

Perhaps you know that Sardar Vallabhbhai and Mahadev are here with me. Sardar has a desire to learn Sanskrit, Mahadev will guide him. Please send a set of your Sanskrit Readers (Parts 1-24). I hope you are all right. We three are doing well.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

SHRI SHRIPAD DAMODAR SATAVLEKAR
SWADHYAYA MANDAL
AUNDH, DIST. SATARA

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 4762. Courtesy: S. D. Satavlekar

138. LETTER TO DUDHIBEHN V. DESAI

July 2, 1932

CHI. DUDHIBEHN,

I expect from you that you should like cloth made from the best yarn spun by you to be used by other people and that you yourself should wear the poorest variety of khadi that you can get. If, however, you lack such courage, you may go as far as you can. Do nothing under pressure from me or through false regard for me. I have pointed out the path of dharma according to my lights. But you may follow it only according to your capacity, and do not feel unhappy, either, that you cannot respect my wishes. If you feel unhappy, I would hesitate in future to make any suggestion about what is right from the point of view of dharma. I get news about Valji from time to time. God protects him.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C W. 7432 Courtesy: Valji G Desai

139. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

July 2, 1932

CHI. MANI[1],

I got your letter. I hope you received my message. Since you intended to send the slivers, you have earned the merit which you would have done if you had sent them. You did well, however, not to send any. No bad slivers are now left here. The slivers we have got are enough. Mahadev has made as many as we need. They have been accumulating for the last two months. Mahadev mostly uses the slivers sent by Chhakkaddas, because they are made from superior cotton and with great care. I shall never be able to spin on the Magan charkha as fine yarn as Mahadev does. I have always held the view—and I am sure I am right—that yarn spun for *yajna* should never be used for oneself. If a man who spins for *yajna* is careless, he has been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

[1] Daughter of Vallabhbhai Patel

The yarn spun for *yajna* should be spun with the utmost care. It would be best if one gives away all the yarn spun by oneself and uses whatever bad or good yarn one can get. If one does not have the heart to do so, one should at any rate spare one hour or half an hour daily for *yajna* and spin at least 160 rounds of yarn as an offering to Lord Krishna.

I can easily understand your prefering group prayer, for you started praying in that manner. But you must also pray by yourself, even if it be only for one minute. Our aspiration should be that ultimately we shall continually and silently go on repeating God's name in our heart, and that is impossible unless one forms the habit of praying by oneself. One can pray by oneself even while lying in bed, bathing, eating or doing any other work. Thus it can never be a burden. On the contrary, such prayer will lighten one's heart—it ought to do so. If you do not get such experience, then you may know that your prayer is not from the heart.

Dahyabhai's[1] problem is a little difficult. But he is very sensible and, therefore, will himself recover his balance of mind. Nobody need advise him in this matter. If he wishes to marry again, nobody can dissuade him from doing so. If, on the contrary, he does not wish to marry again, nobody can tempt him to do so either. Acquaintances will certainly pester him, but Dahyabhai can deal with them. In any case you will be able to deal with them. On such occasions, I feel the sacrifice of having stopped seeing visitors, but it is our duty to bear such sacrifices. My left elbow pains when I work with the arm in a particular manner. A servant has been washing my clothes for about a month. I use utensils supplied in the jail. They are not shining bright, but are clean. Take care of your health and write to me regularly.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. MANIBEHN PATEL
C/o DR. BALWANTRAI KANUGA
ELLIS BRIDGE, AHMEDABAD

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-4: Manibehn Patelne, pp. 84-5

[1] Addressee's brother

140. LETTER TO A FRIEND[1]

July 2, 1932

DEAR . . . ,

Your letter and diary to hand. Is the diary to be returned or should I tear it off? Your disease is an old one. But do not lose heart. Pray to God daily for purity and your passions will subside.

. . . was not at fault in sending the mangoes (to you). If you really did not want them, you ought to have given them away to somebody—some labourer. Then . . . would not have sent again. A woman decidedly knows the weakness of her husband and, labouring under false affection, nourishes it (weakness). If the husband remains true (to himself), he abandons the weakness, and the woman will not tempt him.

Moreover, what is the fault of . . . ? I believe what . . . says. She has no desire for carnal pleasures. She does not become passionate towards any man. Hence there is no reason to doubt her. But supposing that she tells a lie, yet, what is the object in doubting her? A woman cannot doubt her husband. She puts up with the enjoyment of carnal pleasures by her husband. Why should a man keep a watch over and be angry with her Let the woman behave as she may. If she does not want to be chaste, the husband cannot make her preserve her chastity by force. Purity belongs to those who remain pure. Hence, it is deemed proper that you should drive away even from your mind the idea of finding fault with . . . . Such fault-finding causes the ruin of you both. Also it is sinful and unjust to involve another man on suspicion. It is entirely a sign of weakness. Drive away this weakness. You have done well in putting down such things in your diary.

May God grant you peace and purity. Vithaldas must be doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 49

[1] The names have been omitted.

141. LETTER TO SIDDHIMATI

July 2, 1932

DEAR SIDDHIMATI,

Received your letter. Learn Hindi well. What was your weight before? Can you follow Hindi well?

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 61

142. LETTER TO DHIRU

July 2, 1932

DEAR DHIRU,

I am writing to Gajanan[1] about drawing It requires some help from others. There must be more of practice.

I am writing slowly the Urdu copy-book. Do you want the copy-book or do you want to see the way I write the copy-book? If you want to see that, I may tear off the pages I have written and send them to you. If you want a copy-book it can be had even there.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 61

143. LETTER TO GAJANAN V. KHARE

July 2, 1932

CHI. GAJANAN,

Now you must have learnt to read Gujarati. Dhiru is very keen to learn drawing. A few others also may get ready. If possible, spare some time for them.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 307. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

[1] Nephew of Narayan M. Khare, *vide* the following item.

144. LETTER TO SHANTI

July 2, 1932

DEAR SHANTI,

This time your handwriting is good. Write in the same way It is good that during silent (prayers) you do not get sleep.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 63

145. LETTER TO LAKSHMI JERAJANI

July 2, 1932

DEAR LAKSHMI[1],

My hand pains while doing certain work. It is not paralysis. There is no cause for anxiety. Rest is the chief remedy.

Vithaldas had written to me as regards eczema. Radium must be regarded to have been efficacious.

Do send me your daily work.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 63

146. LETTER TO LILADHAR

July 2, 1932

DEAR LILADHAR,

The girls know about the privies. I had only played a joke. Narandas had written about Shanti. Let her remain with you for the present. Remove her stupidity with love. Do not be angry.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 63

[1] Niece of Vithaldas Jerajani

147. LETTER TO TRIVENI J. MEHTA

July 2, 1932

DEAR TRIVENI,

Received your letter You have given a good description. There is much mismanagement in hospitals and hence it is desirable that chaste women should take up the work there. So this is good by way of having some experience. If the mind becomes engrossed in the work, the work is certainly such that to it a life may be devoted.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 63

148 LETTER TO VIDYA

July 2, 1932

DEAR VIDYA[1],

I feel gratified that you have reached Quetta. Take the fullest advantage of the weather there and walk as far as you can. Give me an account of the scenery and climate. Who are the people living there?

What you write is indeed true. If the intention is good the mind is pleased. May your pleasure go on increasing and remain permanent.

Please let me know if you have any information about Anand. How do you pass your time there?

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 73

[1] Presumably Vidya Hingorani, wife of Anand Hingorani

149. LETTER TO MANJULABEHN M. MEHTA

July 2, 1932

DEAR MANJULA[1],

Your letter to hand. I have learnt that you are not going to the Ashram for the present. Go there, whenever it is possible for you to go. Write your daily time-table. Devdas is convalescing now. You must be getting letters from Maganlal.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. MANJULABEHN
SHETH NAUTAMLAL BHAGWAN MEHTA'S HOUSE
JETPUR, KATHIAWAR

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 107

150. LETTER TO RADHA GANDHI

July 2, 1932

DEAR RADHIKA[2],

Your letter to hand. As Premkuver is involved in great difficulties, there is little possibility of her going there. Hence, are you, mother and daughter only there? Who does the shopping, etc.? It does not seem that any of the male members are there. Looking to the conveniences of that place, there may not be any need of them. How much do you spend? Have you kept any account? Is there pipe water? Is there any news about Rupi[3] again? It seems that you have made good progress.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRIMATI RADHABEHN GANDHI
BHATIA SANATORIUM
DEOLALI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 111

[1] Wife of Maganlal Mehta, son of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta
[2] Daughter of Maganlal Gandhi
[3] Presumably Rukhi, addressee's sister

151. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

[Before *July 3, 1932*][1]

All the food that is digested is not transformed into blood, etc., but what is assimilated is transformed into the various elements which sustain or build the body. In the same way, what we read, should be assimilated by us, just as manure is assimilated by the tree and as a result it bears fruit.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 271

152. LETTER TO MAGANBHAI PATEL

July 2/3, 1932

BROTHER MAGANBHAI.

Raojibhai's letter about his lands to hand. In it he writes that you see the necessity of selling the lands, and also believe that the lands will not fetch as much price in the absence of Raojibhai as they would have, if he were present. Instead of coming to a decision himself, Raojibhai has left it to me and Sardar (Vallabhbhai Patel) to decide (the matter). On consultation we have decided that you know most in this matter. There cannot be enough materials before Raojibhai or ourselves to arrive at a decision. Even if you make endeavours and supply us as much information as might be needed, yet it might be considered insufficient. In such matters, decision cannot be and should not be reached without one being actually on the spot. Hence we have come to the decision that you should do whatever is proper to be done having regard to the circumstances. If you think that it should be sold, you should sell it without any hesitation. And if you feel that it can be kept—must be kept—then wait till Raojibhai is released You do without fear whatever is more advantageous. We both of us know that Raojibhai is keen on setting apart a piece of land sufficient for building an ashram for the Dharalas. But, if in carrying out that object, less price is realized

[1] In the source the letter is entered under July 3, 1932, as having been written earlier.

for the lands or if any debt still remains unpaid, it is not necessary to insist on that. If there is any need for an ashram, it will be seen through when Raojibhai is released.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 47

153. HOW TO OBSERVE TRUTH[1]

Sunday, July 3, 1932[2]

What I said about ahimsa[3] also applies to truth. If we split hairs about issues such as whether one may or may not tell a lie to save a cow and ignore what is daily happening before us, we cannot follow truth. By raising such complicated issues we make truth difficult to discover. If we follow truth today in solving the problems which confront us in our daily life, we shall know instinctively how to act in difficult situations when they arise.

Each of us should examine only himself or herself from this point of view. Do I deceive anybody knowingly? If I believe that B is a bad person but show him that I believe him to be good, I deceive him. Do I try to show, in order to win people's respect or esteem, that I possess certain virtues which in fact I do not possess? Do I exaggerate in my speech? Do I hide my misdeeds from persons to whom I should confess them? If a superior or co-worker puts me any question, do I evade him? Do I keep back what I ought to declare? If I do any of these things, I am guilty of untruth. Everybody should examine his conduct daily in this manner and try to overcome his shortcomings. One to whom truth has become second nature and who has risen to a state so that he can never speak untruth may not do this. But everyone who has the least trace of untruth in him or who can follow truth only with effort should examine himself daily as explained above and put to himself those or any other similar questions which may occur to him and reply to them. Anybody who follows this practice even for a month will clearly observe a change having taken place in himself

From a microfilm of the Gujarati. M M U /II

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", June 28/-July 4, 1932, *vide* pp 146-51

[2] From Bombay Secret Abstracts

[3] *Vide* p 96.

154. LETTER TO FULCHAND B. SHAH

July 3, 1932

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

I got your letter of April 31 [*sic*], 1932, as also Raojibhai's of June 10, 1932, only today. All of us were glad to read them. This time 15 lines in your letter were completely censored. If it is possible, tell the person who deals with all such letters, or the Superintendent, to show you the portions which he thinks should be censored, so that you may write the letter again. If this is done, the context would not be suddenly broken as happens at present. Tell everybody there not to expect, or wish for, a separate letter from me. Though there is no restriction on me as regards the number of letters I can write, I think I myself should put a limit on it. Hence I write as few letters as I can. But I do reply to letters from co-workers in jails, or write to one of them when there are many co-workers in the same jail. That serves the purpose of writing to all of them. If, however, anybody wishes to write to me about something specially, he may certainly do so, as Raojibhai has done. We shall not often get opportunities like the unique one we have got just now for self-examination and study. All of us, therefore, should realize that we should so act and spend our time that we would be able to give a good account of every moment.[1] Even a drop of water should not be wasted. We should regard everything in the country, no matter in whose possession it is, as belonging to us and take care of it and use it accordingly. It is plain that this serves several purposes. Tell the boys and girls there that, when they can use the permission to write letters, they may write to me if they don't wish to write to anybody else. It is a strange thing that the rains have not yet commenced here. By now there should have been quite a good amount of rain. Cultivators are worried. Give the accompanying letter to Raojibhai. That is, what follows is meant for him.

I have discussed the matter with Sardar and both of us have come to the conclusion that neither (he nor I) can give an opinion from here. We cannot know many of the facts without being pre-

[1] The two sentences which follow have been taken from Bombay Secret Abstracts.

sent on the spot, and hence I have written[1] to Maganbhai and told him that he may do what he thinks best, taking into account all the relevant circumstances. I have written to him quite a long letter to this effect. I received your letter today and am replying immediately. I have thus not delayed by a single moment. Raojibhai should not worry about the matter at all.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati C W 9445-b Courtesy Chandrakant F Shah

155. *LETTER TO DINKAR*

July 3, 1932

BROTHER DINKAR,

Your letter to hand. I have stopped all visits, as the visit of Mirabehn has been disallowed. Looking to your weight, it can be considered a great improvement (in your health). Nothing can be done about sanatorium from here. I have received here a book named *Vishva Shanti*, i.e., world peace. Mahadev and myself have glanced through it. I cannot know anything about its good or bad points, because, really I have not in me the power to appraise poetry. I have not been able to develop that taste. Doctors believe that there is nothing else except that my hand has been tired out, hence I am giving it rest. I have written by mistake that Mahadev has gone through *Vishva Shanti*. He has not read it.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 109

[1] *Vide* pp. 142-3.

156. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

June 28/July 4, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your mail today. It is seven days today since I started taking milk and fruit. I don't see any effect on the elbow. Perhaps there may be none. I cannot say positively that they have completely agreed with me. What had agreed perfectly is the experiment of almonds, bread and vegetables. But I will continue milk for the present. I feel slightly afraid of developing constipation. If necessary, I will add a little quantity of vegetables. There is no cause at all for worry on this account.

What you say about Sitala Sahay is right. His letter is rude and seems to have been written in anger. If his expenditure is more, he should send you detailed accounts. If they are all right, there should be no objection to paying him more. Hence, instead of fixing an absolute limit of Rs. 60, it seems to me that the better course would be to ask him to send accounts before paying him more. I have explained other points fully in my letter of yesterday, and, therefore don't touch upon them here. I need not write more about the Giri family either.

If Dhiru and Kusum do less physical work and take enough milk, their weight will increase.

Do you hear any time from Nirmala Joshi? She may have some information about Lilabehn. Do you know her address?

Do what you think proper regarding Titus[1]. If you are fully satisfied with his work and his demand is in accord with his requirements, it may be proper to pay him that much. It is natural that the dependants of those who had joined the March[2] and who are no longer in the struggle but are employed in some work will expect help from them. If, therefore, we stick to the letter of their pledge, we may perhaps do them injustice.

Parnerkar's action is highly improper. It is certainly not right to go away without obtaining permission and send a message

[1] A graduate of Higginbottom Agriculture College and trained by Parnerkar at the Ashram

[2] Dandi March in 1930; *vide* Vol. XLIII.

afterwards. However, since his motives are good and his mind has become very weak, I don't wish to censure him. And his sacrifice also has been good. If, therefore, you think it proper send some money to his mother. I know that strict justice will not permit that. But very often cold justice becomes injustice. It is extremely difficult to look into the heart of any human being. Hence, whenever it is a question of paying money, my inclination is always to pay something if we can

Where are Ramarao and Pratap at present? It is enough if Father Elwin is satisfied. He would not expect from us the same attention as Mirabehn could give, nor can we fulfil such an expectation. Few persons would be capable of her careful attention to details when she looks after anybody whom she loves. We cannot, therefore, compete with her. It was very good that the matter of Imam Saheb's tomb was settled.

You must have read what I wrote to Jivram regarding Annapurna. Sharat Chandra Patnaik, from what you write about him, seems to be a good man. If he marries Annapurna, his motive would be primarily humanitarian. However, Jivram should approve of him and Annapurna should be willing. If Sharat Chandra knows the whole story of Annapurna's past and still marries her, he would certainly have my blessings, but he would also deserve compliments.

I suppose you have acknowledged receipt of the various translations of *An Autobiography* which you have received. I think Keshu spinning 350 rounds of yarn of 50 counts is good speed. On what type of spinning-wheel does he spin?

Even those rooms which contain only luggage should be opened at regular intervals. It is a practice in big offices in charge of buildings that the last date on which each building was cleaned and the next date fixed for its cleaning are shown on some part of it. Even if, therefore, the list of future works does not include those items, the dates would be shown on the buildings. The staff would inspect these dates as a matter of routine, so that, if persons have been appointed to attend to such work, it would be carried out in due time without anybody having to remember the dates.

For spinning yarn of fine count, besides good slivers the spindle, the belt and the spindle-holder also are relevant factors. You cannot spin yarn of 50 counts even from the best slivers with the type of belt and spindle in the Magan spinning-wheel. The spindle of the spinning-wheel on which the Andhra women spin yarn of 80 counts is extremely fine, like the wires of an umbrella, and quite small. The belt also is very thin. That is

why those women are able to spin yarn of such fine count. Examine your spindle and belt from this point of view. My own experience is that we cannot spin on any other type of spinning-wheel as fine yarn and with as much ease as we can on the Gandiva spinning-wheel, and the chief reason for this is the extremely thin belt of the latter. My eyes tell me that such thin belt will not work on a spinning-wheel which stands vertical. Moreover, we can never achieve on the wheel of the latter the same control as on the Gandiva wheel. For the same reason, a delicate spindle-bearer like the one with which the Gandiva wheel is fitted will not work on the other types. We ought to master the art of spinning yarn of the finest count, and those who have very much more experience in this field than I should spin for trial on the different types of spinning-wheels and examine them from this point of view.

I went through your summary. I have said enough on this subject in previous letters,[1] and so I need not write anything here. You need not continue to send such summaries every week. If you make any changes after studying the figures, please inform me about them. If information from more persons is received and if you have any comments to make, please write. I will preserve the register sent by you, so that, if you refer to it in explaining anything, I will consult it and find out the point of the reference. Personally, I learn a great deal from such summaries and they also help me to think clearly. You have done well in giving details about every person which help me to identify him or her.

I see from Panditji's letter that you observe five minutes' silence in the morning too. If you have found the result of the practice good, let it be continued. My own suggestion, however, was only for the evening prayer. The inmates attend it after tiring work for the whole day and, therefore, may require a little longer time to concentrate their attention in meditation. Five minutes' silence will help in acquiring such concentration. At the time of morning prayer the condition is quite the opposite, and so silence may not be necessary for the purpose I have explained. Panditji thinks that many of them doze during these five minutes. I have here discussed the necessity or otherwise of five minutes' silence from a general point of view. From the spiritual point of view, the longer the period of silence during prayer the better it is. But that is only for those who can benefit from

[1] *Vide* pp. 30-5 and 99-106.

it. Please do not understand me to mean that the five minutes' silence in the morning should be stopped. It is obvious that an excellent practice which has been started ought not to be discontinued in a hurry. I have said all this to tell you that, if you are of the same view as Panditji and would like to reduce five minutes to one minute but refrain from doing so because you had understood my suggestion to mean that I wanted five minutes' silence at both times, you are free to make a change.

July 3, 1932

There was a hint in Panditji's letter, and Mahadev also tells me, that children do not get enough sleep. They ought to get at least eight hours' uninterrupted sleep. They can get that only if they go to bed at 7.30 p.m., assuming that we want them to get up at 3.30 a m. I also believe that children should get at least eight hours' sleep. It would be desirable if the grown-ups also get as many hours of rest. One way of ensuring this would be to start the evening prayer at 7 and finish it at 7.30 or rather at 7.20. Since half an hour is the minimum time required for the prayer, it should start at 6.50. Alternatively, [in the morning] the bell should be given at 4 and the prayer should start at 4 30. Still another way would be to have a separate time for prayer for children, which should be at the commencement of their class. There is, in fact, a prayer at that time. We should be satisfied with that. Apart from that, the children should form the habit of praying [either in the morning or in the evening]. They may pray in the morning whenever they get up The general time for rising should not be later than 4 a.m. and morning prayer ought not to start later than 4.30. And the children must get at least eight hours' sleep. Taking these two conditions as essential, you may make any changes that may appear necessary. You will have to decide who should be counted as children. Boys and girls who are neither children nor adolescents may be counted as children if they wish. The rule for them should be that they may continue to be counted as children for one year at the longest. Those who are ill have always been exempted from attending the morning prayers. Indu and other boys like him should be exempted, whether or not they themselves wish. That is, a boy or girl who is losing weight should not be put to the strain of getting up early. That Indu does not get sleep before ten is certainly not a desirable state of affairs. If his bed is made in the open near yours, he is bound to get sleep. Even though he should be exempted from attending the

morning prayer, he must form the habit of sleeping early. Think over all this and make any changes you may think necessary.

Shamal seems to be troubled in his mind. I have advised[1] him to have a talk with you. Without waiting for him to come to you, send for him and ask him what his difficulties are.

There is a letter from Manjula, in which she says that her going to the Ashram has been postponed. Perhaps she has written to you also. She has not given the reason.

There is no change in the condition of my left arm. It seems that it will improve in course of time purely through rest. You need not worry about it at all. I do take milk to please the Superintendent, but at present at any rate I don't see that it has benefited me much. However, I am continuing it for the present. Along with it I take *rotli*, instead of bread, and a vegetable with one of the meals. Just now it is the season for grapes in Karachi. Lalwani[2], therefore, sends parcels of them from time to time and I eat them too. The weight has risen to 104.

About yarn, if you see Shardabehn[3] perhaps you may be able to get yarn spun by women for the *yajna* of spinning. We must—if we can—discover some means of meeting the acute demand for yarn.

How do Jamna and Purushottam spend their time in Ranavav? If you know the details of their daily routine, let me have them.

Inform Ba that I got only one letter written by her. Does she get mine?

BAPU

July 4, 1932

I had written about a few rules for the Ashram and about prayer. These articles[4] do not seem to have been circulated to all. Send copies of them to me. You will find in Mahadev's cupboard a big French dictionary belonging to him. Send that and the Urdu translation of *An Autobiography* along with the Urdu books which I have asked Prema to send. Why has Nirmala[5] (Aunt) stopped writing to me? Mahadev desires you to tell Durga that she has not said anything about money and her health in

[1] *Vide* p. 120
[2] Chabildas Rochiram Lalwani, husband of J. B. Kripalani's sister
[3] Shardabehn Mehta
[4] *Vide* pp 68-9 and Vol. XLIX, pp. 386-8.
[5] Mahadev Desai's step-sister

her letter, and that she should write about them in her letter to him. The *rotlis* for me are made by Mahadev.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M M.U /I. Also C.W. 8236. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

157. LETTER TO MANGALA S. PATEL

July 4, 1932

DEAR MANGALA,

When did you begin suffering from pain in the chest and waist and for how many years have you been suffering? How do you feel now?

It is true absence of desire when we trust that whatever we do is done by God Himself. The greatest act of one attached to truth is to stick to truth in whatever condition one is placed.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 197

158. TELEGRAM TO PAPA

[*July 5, 1932*][1]

PAPA[2]
GANDHI ASHRAM, TIRUCHENGODU

DEVDAS WIRES NEWS YOUR HUSBAND'S[3] DEATH. WE ARE ALL DEEPLY STIRRED BUT YOU WILL NOT GRIEVE OVER DEATH WHICH IS COMMON LOT OF HUMANITY. REMEMBER YOU ARE DAUGHTER OF BRAVE FATHER. MAY GOD GIVE YOU PEACE. LOVE FROM US ALL.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 11

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Devdas Gandhi", p. 152.
[2] Daughter of C. Rajagopalachari
[3] Varadachari

159. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

[*July 5, 1932*][1]

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI
PRISONER, DISTRICT JAIL
VELLORE

WE ARE DEEPLY GRIEVED OVER PAPA'S BEREAVEMENT OF WHICH DEVDAS HAS SENT WIRE. BUT YOU STAND IN NO NEED CONSOLATION FROM US. GOD MUST BE YOUR ROCK. LOVE FROM US ALL.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 11

160. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

July 5, 1932

DEAR DEVDAS,

Just received your wire. Who can expect Varadachari to die! There was some fear that Papa would pass away, but Varadachari has passed away. Inscrutable are His ways. It is good that the God of Death does not renounce anybody's friendship. Sooner or later he shows his liking for all. I have wired to Papa as under: (Wire in English)[2]. To Raja as under: (Wire in English)[3].

I have sent wires as above.[4]

Raja will be shocked but his power of endurance is strong and so there need be no anxiety. Death as such seldom affects me. What touches me is the miseries suffered by relatives. What greater ignorance can there be than to grieve over death?

You must have received the letters I have sent. The letter which was thought to have been lost has been handed over to you This information has been sent by your Superintendent to the Superintendent here. So your hunger for my letters must be satisfied.

[1] *Vide* the following item.

[2] & [3] Not reproduced here, *vide* the preceding two items.

[4] The paragraph which follows has been collated with the Gujarati in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I.

We all three are happy. There is nothing new to write about. I have already written to you that I have begun taking *roti* and milk.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800, p 169 and *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p 274

161. LETTER TO SARALADEVI CHOWDHARANI

July 5, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I was grieved to note from the papers that your mother was no more. My sympathies go out to you and Deepak[1] in your sorrow. Sardar and Mahadev join me in sending you condolences.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SMT. SARALADEVI CHOWDHARANI[2]
CALCUTTA

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 159

162. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

July 5, 1932

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

Only today I got your letter[3] of June 27. In my letter of June 29[4] I have acknowledged receipt of the khadi. I have also asked for some books that came to my mind on reading your booklets Numerous questions have occurred to me while reading the literature but I intend to take them up if any remain unsolved

[1] Son of the addressee

[2] Wife of Pandit Rambhuj Dutt Chowdhari and grand-niece of Rabindranath Tagore

[3] The addressee, who was himself a lover of khadi and jaggery although owning cotton-mills and sugar factories, had referred to the rivalry between khadi and mill-cloth and between jaggery and sugar.

[4] A slip for June 28; *vide* p 108.

after the completion of the present study. These days I constantly manage to read something or other that must add something however little to my knowledge. I am still reading Prof. Shah's book. After that I shall start on Iyer's book on foreign exchange which he has sent to me.

At present, mills function side by side with the production of khadi and it will continue thus for some time. Ultimately a contest between the two is inevitable as our ideal is to produce khadi in all the villages. Thus mills will no longer have a place in India when each village can produce khadi. But for the time being people like you can have both the activities at the same time provided the ideal is kept before the public in order to assert the truth. People so inclined will continue to indulge in criticism, it cannot be helped.

I do not possess sufficient knowledge about jaggery but I have an impression that mills will remain indispensable for the production of sugar. Sugar cannot be easily manufactured in villages, nor can every village grow sugar-cane, which means that production of jaggery cannot be a universal occupation. Perhaps I am wrong in thinking so. However, if a person can advocate mills as well as khadi he can assuredly talk of jaggery and sugar factories at the same time.

The more I study of economics the firmer I grow in my belief that the methods suggested in these books for eradicating poverty are not at all efficacious. The method lies in working out a scheme wherein the production and consumption happen to be simultaneous and this scheme can work only with the revival of village industries.

I have started taking milk on the Superintendent's insistence, also chapati and vegetable. Vegetable, I take once a day and chapati twice a day. But no longer do I notice the cleansing of the bowels that I experienced formerly on a diet of *roti*, almonds and a vegetable. But I will not give up milk in a hurry now that I have started it. I shall watch the results. These days I am taking the grapes sent from Karachi by Kripalaniji's brother-in-law.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 7901. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

163. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

July 6, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. By trying to give artistic appearance to the envelope, you spoiled it. This is bound to be the result when one tries to create beauty which meets no practical need. Sardar makes no effort to give to an envelope artistic appearance for its own sake, such appearance is the by-product of practical utility and, therefore, pleases the eye. If we wish to use again an envelope which has been used once, the address written on it should be covered up. For that purpose Sardar stuck over the written lines finely cut slips of paper of appropriate sizes, and that gave the envelope an attractive appearance. But he was not satisfied with this. So now he turns the envelopes received from there inside out, so that he need not paste slips over them and the envelopes may look as good as new. You will discover this if you examine them closely. Your slips with zigzag edges had half come off and looked very shabby. And they served no practical purpose. Your labour, therefore, was wasted, and so were the time and the paper. That was a loss to the public. Draw two lessons from this: never imitate anyone blindly, and beauty created for its own sake is no beauty. It is said about the great cathedrals in Europe that all their beautiful features serve a practical purpose. Whether this is true or not, there can be no doubt about the truth of the principle which I have stated.

Your letter this time contained very little besides a criticism of the Minister I think it unnecessary to consider whether or not your criticism is justified, since it can have no effect. The statement "judge not lest ye be judged" deserves to be engraved in our hearts. I do not know if there is a Gujarati saying with a similar meaning. If there is any in Marathi, send it to me

I should like to have a list of the Urdu books. In any case, send Shibli's volume. I know that Khalifa's biography, too, is there.

I should certainly like it if you would prefer to die rather than eat fish. Does that mean that you would not take cod-liver oil too? You need not consider what I would wish [you to do]. I have put the question simply to know your own attitude.

You should increase milk/curds and/or ghee in your diet. It must also include occasionally some ripe fruit in place of uncooked vegetable. Don't you grow *papayas* there? Or tomatoes? Or *bhaji*[1] of any kind? Why should you, yourself, not grow some tomatoes? And also lettuce—it grows quickly. Unripe *papaya* ought not to be eaten in large quantity. Nor should it be eaten daily. Introduce this change without thinking about the expense. Keep up Kuhne-baths with hot water. It is very necessary to massage the spot where you feel the pain. Any girl will be glad to do the massage.

Vidya's[2] dullness will disappear if you try to teach her with love. Rambhau's case is a little difficult. There is only one remedy, however. There are three influences working on him. If they do not work in harmony, there will be a problem. The three influences are: Panditji, Lakshmibehn and you or anybody else who looks after him. Only love will enable you to discover a way out of this difficulty. In the measure that your love becomes wider in scope, in that measure will your capacity to reform such children increase.

Be generous towards the grown-up girls in the Ashram. They do not purposely shirk work and sit idle at home; they do not work because they become helpless. You and I cannot judge the degree of their helplessness. They alone can do so. Their judgment may, of course, be wrong. But we should be satisfied if their motive is not dishonest. Among the grown-up girls, think about Anandi, Kusum[3] and Nimu. What could all these girls do? Anandi is not likely to shirk work. Kusum at any rate will never do so. Nimu is burdened with two children. She hardly knows how to bring them up, but has already become a mother. How much work, therefore, can we expect from her? Perhaps you will be able to think of many more instances. We cannot weigh all such cases in scales with which we weigh gold and pearls. You will also see from experience that as you become more generous you will find it easier to make others work. I don't know how far it is true, but it is said [about me] that I have great capacity for making men work. If this is true, the reason is that I never suspect anyone of shirking work. I am satisfied with the work that a person does. I then ask him to do more, and he does. There are also some who say that there will be hardly anyone

[1] Vegetables

[2] Vidya R. Patel

[3] Kusum Gandhi, whom Narandas Gandhi regarded as his daughter

whom people deceive as much as they do me. Even if this assessment is proved correct, I shall not feel sorry. I would be satisfied if people give me a testimonial that I deceive no one in the world. If nobody else gives such a testimonial to me, I certainly give it to myself.

I hate untruth more than anything else.

I don't believe in the principles of "the greatest good of the greatest number" and "survival of the fittest". For man the rule is, the good of all, the progress of all and "the weak first". We bipeds are human beings, but we have not yet risen above the nature of quadrupeds. Dharma lies in doing so.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N. 10293. Also C W 6741. Courtesy. Premabehn Kantak

164. LETTER TO MATHURADAS PURUSHOTTAM

July 6, 1932

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I got your letter. You should not belittle your idea of sewing for *yajna* Its real value lies in turning to use even the poorest quality of khadi We cannot afford to pay for sewing. However, those who are ready to do sewing as free service can give even to the most unattractive khadi the value which devotees of God give to flowers by making garlands for the deity from them. For instance, one who gives such service should not make a shirt from bad khadi, but he can make quilts, bags or pillows from it We can think of a number of things made from such khadi which would not need to be washed and which could be used for a long time in the same condition. I had a hand-spun and hand-woven woollen blanket with me, which I had received as a gift. It had been so much worn out by use that, if used longer, it would have got torn out into pieces. But, being of an ingenious turn of mind and having a friend like Janakibehn[1] who is ever ready to help me, I gave the blanket to her and told her how she could make it into a new one. The blanket is still with me. I deliberately took it with me, when I visited the Royal Palace in England[2] Let me explain, too, how the

[1] Wife of Jamnalal Bajaj

[2] During the Round Table Conference in 1931

blanket was made new. It was sewn on to a piece of thick khadi, the whole surface being stitched both length-wise and breadth-wise. The worn-out woollen blanket, being thus lined with khadi, became as good as new and gave more warmth than before. This does not mean that the effort which you are making for improving the quality of yarn is unnecessary. I daily realize the necessity of such effort. But such improvement will not reduce the importance of sewing for *yajna* or dispense with it. The love of khadi has still not spread widely in the country. It means, in other words, that love of the poor has not spread so, or, even where it exists, the people who have it are ignorant and are not yet convinced that the best way of showing their love is by patronizing khadi. If they can be convinced of this, your discovery can become very useful. I have not, therefore, become indifferent to it in the slightest degree Do write a book on how to spin better yarn. But do not make a single statement in it the truth of which you have not tested. Nor should you deduce any general principle only on the basis of exclusively your experience. Others also must have found it true. If you have not checked all your statements in this manner, postpone writing the book. I observe again and again that books which have no basis in experience are practically without any value. For instance, if anybody translated Charaka[1], the work would not be of any use today since we cannot find many of the herbs and plants described by him and, with regard to those which we do find, cannot prove the properties attributed to them. The most important thing therefore is that you yourself should spin the finest possible yarn of different counts and, while doing so, analyse and note the contribution of the spindle, the type of the spinning-wheel, the quality of the cotton used, the quality of the carding and your own, that is, the spinner's skill towards the result. Then tally your experience with that of other spinners. A book based on such data will be accepted without question, like a bar of gold weighed on the scale kept in the market for public use. You asked me what limit I have fixed with regard to the count of the yarn spun. Previously I had fixed it at 20, then raised it to 40. I do not lay down any limit now. If we can get or grow cotton from which we can spin yarn of 400 counts and which we can card well enough for such purpose, and if we can get men or women spinners who have sufficient patience to spin yarn of such quality, I would certainly desire that we should

[1] Author of *Charakasamhita*, a manual of Ayurvedic medicine

reach that level. In short, I think it very important that we should go in this direction as far as we can, for this is likely immediately to enhance the value of the art of hand-spinning. I am sure you know that a friend of Satis Babu had reached up to 150 counts. The khadi woven from it is preserved in Satis Babu's collection. But along with this I also insist that as we progress in spinning yarn of finer and finer count the yarn should always be strong and even. I cannot say what marks any specimen of yarn should earn for passing the test in these respects. Only you and other experienced spinners can say that. I certainly have a rough test for this purpose, and it is that any weaver should be able to weave the yarn without difficulty. If a weaver rejects a lot, I would treat it as below par though it may have passed our test. When I get the cup, I will try the method suggested by you and test the strength of my yarn. Even without testing it, however, I know that it is not good enough, and I am myself not satisfied with it. Because of the pain in my elbow, I have had to change from one hand to the other [for drawing the yarn]. My hand had set very well on the Gandiva spinning-wheel and I could spin on it yarn of sufficiently uniform quality as I wished, though the speed was not much to speak of. But I was obliged to draw the thread with the right hand and then to spin on the Magan spinning-wheel, with the result that it is only now that I have acquired some control over it. As if this was not enough, I thought it my duty to use up the very inferior quality of slivers we had and I began spinning them. I have now resumed spinning with good slivers since a few days ago, and so, by the time your cup arrives and I try it, my yarn will have become good enough to pass the test. Previously I used to spin yarn of about 25 counts, but after I started spinning with the Magan wheel I remain at about 19 counts. Probably I will go up now. I think I have now answered all your questions. Have courage and cultivate strength of mind. Don't think too much. How is Motibehn[1]?

I have received the cup.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 3755

[1] Addresse's wife

165. *LETTER TO FEBOZABEHN TALEYARKHAN*

July 6, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

Received your letter. You must be having the benefit of cold weather. Information has been received about Devdas being completely cured and hence there is no cause for anxiety. You are keeping yourself well-informed. Ba is happy. My visits are still disallowed. *Vandemataram* from the Sardar and Mahadev.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800 (40)(3), Pt II, p 173

166. *LETTER TO PARAMANAND*

July 6, 1932

BROTHER,

I have today learnt from a newspaper the news of your wife's death. When you were imprisoned in the Andamans I had come to know her and was much impressed by her simplicity. May God grant you peace and patience.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 163

167. *LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA*

July 6, 1932

CHI PARASRAM,

I have both your letters. Whenever there is doubt about the grammar of a Hindi word, is not consulting a dictionary the right course? One who knows Sanskrit will commit fewer mistakes in using his words. But a word used in Sanskrit in a particular sense would not, as a rule, be used in the same sense in Hindi. We should therefore regard the dictionary as

an authority. And where the help of the dictionary is not available, we should regard one who knows Sanskrit as an authority. I looked up the word *nirutsaha* [wanting in enthusiasm] in the Hindi dictionary which is with me, and there also it is termed an adjective. Hence one who knows Sanskrit and the dictionary both agree about it. I write all this merely out of love of language. I expect a higher knowledge of the language from those who know a particular language. I also expect them to use it correctly. Hence I asked about the word *nirutsaha* in my last letter[1]. I have always thought your knowledge of Hindi to be sound and I expect you to be more and more vigilant about it day by day Someone must dedicate his life in the service of Hindi. Politics is always on our neck. But this cannot be nor should it be an exclusive field. We might have willingly or unwillingly plunged into it, but as soon as its activities calm down, we should return to our pursuit. Also not all of us need plunge into politics at all times. Hence we should select, according to our capacity and inclination, any of the many permanent and constructive activities [2] You certainly have a liking for Hindi. Now I would like you to think of dedicating your life for the spread of Hindi after adding to your knowledge of Hindi as much as you can. I do not mean to say that you should make this resolve soon. For the present you may carry on what you are doing. Most of your time is already taken up by Hindi. Whether you should stick to Hindi till the end of your life will become clear by itself in course of time. Just now I have simply sown the seed.

Now about the *Ramayana*. What you write on this subject is true. I do not regard the *Ramayanas* such as by Radhasoami[3], etc , to be refined works. The *Ramayana* of Tulsidas is a work of great refinement. We only have to create interest in it. We can surely bring out an abridged *Ramayana* in Tulsidas's own language. I had made an attempt with regard to the 'Balakanda'.[4] Most probably there is a copy in the Ashram Twenty years have passed since then. If I were to take up the task again, perhaps I would choose entirely different quatrains and couplets from it Prabhudas has also made an attempt in this direction. As you are engaged in teaching, it will be useful if you did something in this direction. Also you ought not to have much difficulty Mahadev tells me

[1] *Vide* pp 87-8

[2] The following two sentences are from Bombay Secret Abstracts

[3] Presumably Radheshyam Kathavachak, author of a popular Hindi *Ramaayna*

[4] *Vide* Vol IX, pp. 97-9

that two or three such attempts have already been made in the U P. But that need not deter you. There is no harm if a fourth is added to them. People of different temperaments, keeping in mind children or people of a different class, would make different sections. I will not insist if you do not get time during the evening prayer. The Hindi classes are always there. Try to create interest in the *Ramayana* whenever possible. Also if some wish to study the *Ramayana* out of devotion, and if you can spare time, you may arrange for such a class once or twice a week. But I do not at all insist on it. I am only expressing my desire. You alone can say how and to what extent it can be carried out.

You must be perturbed, as I write all this. I think your work is going on well. Comparatively you were never more at ease than now and I do not at all wish to disturb you or make your mind unsteady by putting before you new ideas or schemes. These thoughts came to my mind on reading your letter and so I have placed them before you. Accept out of them whatever you can fully understand, digest and put them into execution, and forget the rest. Even if you discarded the whole lot, I would not be shocked.[1] I have only one mighty desire for you that you may feel yourself entirely at ease and may not be embarrassed at all.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9643. Courtesy Parasram Mehrotra
Also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800 (40)(3), Pt. II, pp. 213-9

168. *LETTER TO MATAPRASAD GUPTA*

[*July 6, 1932*][2]

BROTHER MATAPRASADJI,

Received your letter as well as the book. Prisoners are prohibited from giving their opinions in regard to books. Therefore please excuse (me). Moreover, I am not entitled to express an opinion on a book on the culinary art, and I cannot express one.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 171

[1] What follows is from Bombay Secret Abstracts.

[2] The letter is placed in the source along with other letters of this date. In the "Diary" it is entered under July 4.

169. LETTER TO AN AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT

July 7, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I was touched by your letter. If you can possibly stand the climate of this country and the strenuous life of the Ashram, I would be delighted to have you as a member. There is no fee to be paid and you will not be called upon to pay for your board and lodging, so long as you can share the common meal. But the life is hard and incredibly simple. All the inmates are expected to labour in the field and the factory for a certain number of hours daily. All work, including scavenging, is done by the inmates. The dress we wear is also very simple and is all hand-spun and hand-woven, and sewn at the Ashram. If, therefore, you feel inclined to venture out, whilst you are welcome, I would warn you against coming unless you have enough funds to take you back to America in the event of the climate or the institution not being aggreeable to you. In spite of this letter [if] you desire to come to India and join the Ashram, I would like you to see Mr. Richard Gregg, who has lived at the Ashram for a long time and knows all about it, and you will not think of coming unless he gives you encouragement. His address is: Richard Hurst Hill, Esq., Spl. Asstt. to the President, Howard University, Washington, U.S.A.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy C.W. 9319. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

170. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

July 7, 1932

CHI. MANIBEHN (PARIKH),

Mahadev has talked to me about your letter to him. How can you help if your body does not give service? If all those inmates of the Ashram who cannot work were to be asked to leave, we would have to send away many of them. You need not feel ashamed. Those who spare their bodies and shirk work should feel ashamed. If the Ashram cannot maintain persons like you, it should be considered useless.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati· G.N. 5970 Also C W. 3287 Courtesy. Vanamala M Desai

171 LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

July 7, 1932

MY DEAR DAUGHTER RAIHANA,

I have not received any letter from you this week so far. I have read with great attention the *bhajan* and the *ghazal* which you sent to me I liked both of them and fully understand them now. The *bhajan* is easy to understand, but there was some difficulty in understanding the *ghazal* as it contained new words. But I fully understood it after reading it over two or three times. The *ghazal* is very good indeed. I suppose "Zafar" is the nom de plume of Emperor Bahadur Shah, is it not? Send me more such *ghazals* from time to time. You wrote to me once that you would find out and send a suitable book for me. If you have forgotten your promise, please remember it now and send a book if you find one. At present I am reading some books published by the Jamia Millia. All of them are full of good thoughts. Two of the books were plays. The book I am reading at present contains stories like the "Kimiyagar" and others. Have you seen these books? Convey respectful greetings from us all to Father and Mother. As for you, a little squeezing of your ear on my behalf, which may be done by Kamal. I am waiting for a letter from

Hamida. Uncle Sardar is still reading Amir Ali's book. The rains have now set in here. Cultivators were worrying. The weather has become now fairly cool. I hope Pashabhai's sister is all right now.[1]

You should correct in the foregoing not only spelling mistakes but grammar mistakes also. The Urdu book which you send to me will be more useful if it also contains a glossary of ordinary words, rules of grammar and spelling, etc. If there is no such book you need not trouble yourself.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu/Gujarati: S.N. 9647. Also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800 (40)(3), Pt II, p 151

172. LETTER TO ZOHRA BANU ANSARI

July 7, 1932

MY DEAR DAUGHTER ZOHRA,

You will be surprised to read this letter. The reason for writing this is that now that Bapa[2] has been released, you may write to me about his health. (Let me also know) how much weight he has lost. What have you been doing all these days? Sardar Vallabhbhai and Mahadev Desai are with me. We are all in perfect health. Convey our respects to (your) father and mother. May God give you long life and may He make you a great servant of the country! Write to me soon. If you write a beautiful hand, then alone I shall be able to read it.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 153

[1] This paragraph is in Urdu.
[2] Dr. M. A. Ansari

173. LETTER TO RATILAL P. MEHTA

July 7, 1932

DEAR RATILAL,

Have you not completely forgotten me now? Do not remove Shashi[1] from the Sharda Mandir at all. He is being taught properly there. You must be happy.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 191

174. LETTER TO KUSUM

July 7, 1932

DEAR KUSUM (JUNIOR),

What was the question you asked me? I have entirely forgotten. You write it again and I will answer it. I thought that I had already answered all questions. It is certainly good to absorb the rays of the sun sitting under a *neem* tree. You should start taking a hip-bath. By it, the temperature will certainly go down. Rest is certainly the principal item. You should not feel tired at all when you go out for a walk. When you can read and play on the *sitar*, how do you feel tired? Other things can be done lying down. In Gujarati, you can read *Raichandbhaina Lekho*, (or writings of Raichandbhai), all parts of *Kavya Dohan*, *Naval Granthavali*, *Astodaya*, Gujarati translation of *Shakuntala*, selections from the Gujarati Reading Series, works of Kakasaheb, books by Kishorelalbhai, etc. All these will be more than enough. Many more can also be mentioned.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 191

[1] Addressee's son

175. LETTER TO SITALA SAHAY

July 7, 1932

BROTHER SITALA SAHAY,

Your letter to hand. I have carefully gone through it. It is not proper that you should compete with Prabhudas. It is likely that Prabhudas's expenses might be less as he gets some other conveniences. Some estimate can be arrived at from the expenses incurred by Prabhudas. But, as a matter of fact, the unavoidable expenses only are to be taken into account. A big amount was to be spent for Rasik all of a sudden. Maganlal fell ill and died at such a place in Patna that no expenses were incurred. One time, Krishnadas did not incur any expense. But when he was removed to Dehradun, the expenses rose at once. Hence, ultimately every case is to be separately considered. We can only desire and demand from them that they should spend money thoughtfully and keep an account of the money spent. The Ashram can spend so far as it can afford to do it. When the Ashram cannot afford, we should all assemble in the Ashram and suffer the consequences and while so doing should laugh and enjoy the pleasure. I have suggested this to Narandas also. On looking at the bill of Padma[1], if there is anything to be said, it should be written to you if you are there or to Padma. Is not this proper?

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 211

176. LETTER TO LAKSHMI

July 7, 1932

DAUGHTER LAKSHMI[2],

If Devdas had not sent me a wire, from where could I have got intimation of Papa's condition? I hope you are at present working like a brave woman. Please let me have all information about Papa. I have written a letter for Papa and I am sending it

[1] Addressee's daughter

[2] Daughter of C Rajagopalachari, who later married Devdas Gandhi

along with this. Now Anna must have come to the Ashram. Tell him to write to me.

Do not spoil your health by worrying. Fear of death and sorrow should be abandoned altogether. Why should there be pain and fear for a thing which is inevitable for every human being? It is ignorance to regard death as a punishment from God. Death is a gift to man from God.

I expect a long letter from you.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800 (40)(3), Pt II, p 149

177. LETTER TO SHAMAL R. RAVAL

July 8, 1932

CHI. SHAMAL,

There are many mill-workers who never touch a drop of liquor If your brother does not listen to you, you should stop associating with him. Pray to God to grant him good sense. First you should politely try as well as you can to persuade him to stop drinking. Anybody who is ill is exempted from *yajna*. It is good to do such work at fixed times But if one cannot do it on some day at the time fixed, one may do it at some other time.

Liquor cannot prevent any disease.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 3144. Also C W. 2879 Courtesy: Shamal R. Raval

178. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

July 8, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

A flower is just like ourselves. It blooms at its proper time. Then it may be said to have grown up.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5777. Also C.W. 3000. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

179. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

July 8, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

It is certainly good that those who feel sleepy during the prayers keep standing. One reason why the feet of those who stand up ache is that they do not know how to stand. Anybody who keeps his feet on the ground thus, Λ, and who stands erect can stand for a long time without getting tired. One who is not accustomed to standing will certainly feel tired for a day or two. But afterwards he will not feel tired. We should show love for those who follow the wrong path, and serve them, but we ourselves should follow the right path. If we do this, in time the other person will come to the right path. One who cultivates devotion to God, whether he is working or resting, teaches devotion to others too. Following the path of truth in life helps us in every way.

Your questions seem to have been asked for the sake of asking them.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati. M M.U /II

180. LETTER TO NATHURAM TRIKAMDAS

July 8, 1932

CHI. NATHURAM,

One who does not share in the work cannot be called a partner.

There is certainly *himsa* in castrating a bull.

The sacred thread worn by one cannot be used as belt for the spinning-wheel.

One who uses authority over others without consulting them is an autocrat.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati· M.M U./II

181. LETTER TO GOKIBEHN

July 8, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I have been wanting to write to you since a month ago and had, therefore, asked for your address. I have just got it. I hope you enjoy peace of mind. Does anybody stay with you? Do write to me from time to time.

Jai Shri Krishna from
BAPU

SMT. GOKIBEHN[1]
KARSANDAS DHARAMSINH'S BUNGALOW
KRISHNA BHUWAN
BORIVLI

From a photostat of the Gujarati S.N. 9813

182. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

July 8, 1932

CHI. MANU,

If a child does not like milk, how can he grow well? If you drink milk only when you are hungry, you will come to like it. During the five minutes' silence at the prayer time, you should repeat the name of Rama. You should not tease a child who is easily teased. If we keep a diary, we know what we did at what time and our laziness disappears.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. C.W. 7433. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

[1] Aunt of Shantikumar Morarjee

183. LETTER TO PUNJABHAI H. SHAH

July 8, 1932

DEAR PUNJABHAI,

To one who is sinless, death is a bed of happiness. When we have taken to heart the lesson that birth and death are one and the same thing, we should know that we have freed ourselves from the cycle of birth and death.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 201

184. LETTER TO PUSHPA S. PATEL

July 8, 1932

DEAR PUSHPA,

You have improved your handwriting very much.

To write a biography means to write whatever we know about the life of a person which is fit to be published If one feels sleepy at the prayer time, one must stand up.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 197

185. LETTER TO BALABHADRA

July 8, 1932

DEAR BALABHADRA[1],

I am not satisfied with your letter. The fact that questions do not occur means that you do not want to ask questions. But that does not mean that one who has a question to ask should write a letter. You write in a clear hand what you are doing, seeing

[1] A student at the Ashram

and thinking about. If you go through my writings you will get the answers to the questions asked by you. Do you remember what you had asked? If anyone commits a fault, his elder prevents him from doing so. One should not talk at the time of *yajna*.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 201

186. LETTER TO SHANTI

July 8, 1932

DEAR SHANTI,

Countless insects are born during the rains. You should not collect the snails. Such insects are the creation of God. We do not know the use of all of them.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 193

187. LETTER TO JAYA

July 8, 1932

DEAR JAYA,

When we meet a thief, we should request him not to steal, if we have courage and love for him. We must endure it if he beats us.

Sleep must be without dreams. If you are at fault and the elders do not punish you, this is mercy.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II. p. 193

188. LETTER TO ANANDI

July 8, 1932

DEAR ANANDI,

I shall see how long you remember your irritability. It is good that you take milk regularly. How can I forget the stick while taking a walk in the evening? Girls like you should read books selected by the teacher. Then you will learn to select the books.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 195

189. LETTER TO MAHAVIR GIRI

July 8, 1932

DEAR MAHAVIR,

Now you must have received the money. All should keep the diary complete. You all write to me the full programme for a day or two. Durga[1] must be better now.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 199

190. LETTER TO INDU N. PAREKH

July 8, 1932

DEAR INDU,

It is very good that you have confidence in Narandas. As he says it is possible that you will benefit by being patient in taking food and sleeping for a long time. Do you get motions properly?

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 201

[1] Addressee's sister

191. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

July 8, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

It is my belief that nobody really knows the origin of the name Bharatakhanda. But it is said the name Bharatakhanda came from Bharat, the son of Shakuntala[1]. You need not give any importance to things like the shaking of legs, etc. In olden times, if there was knowledge in one direction there was also ignorance in another.

We may describe the sister as a *sahadharmacharini* if she is staying with her brother. But it is customary to use that term only for a wife. I always tear up the letters.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original C.W. 9953. Courtesy. Sharadabehn G. Chokhawala

192. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

July 9, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE,

Upon inquiring of Major Bhandari why there has been recently irregularity about my post, I find that his orders are to send all my outgoing and incoming post to the Government. If this procedure means interminable delay in the despatch of the outgoing post and the delivery to me of the incoming post, I should lose all interest in this, what to me is, healthy mental food. I do not write idly. Nor, so far as I am aware, do I transgress the limits to which I may go in writing to my friends. If the Government intend to continue to let me write the letters I have been writing hitherto, I should like to be sure of regularity about the handing in of my correspondence. The letters to and from the Ashram are regularly written. I attach the greatest importance to this correspondence, including my letters to and from Shri-

[1] Wife of Dushyanta, hero of Kalidasa's *Abhijnanashakuntalam*

mati Mirabai. I should like to know at the earliest possible moment where I stand in the matter of my post.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40), Part I, p 239

193. LETTER TO P. G. MATHEW

July 9, 1932

MY DEAR MATHEW,

In 'God is Truth', 'is' certainly does not mean 'equal to' nor does it merely mean 'is truthful'. Truth is not a mere attribute of God but He is That. He is nothing if He is not That. Truth in Sanskrit means *Sat* *Sat* means 'Is'. Therefore Truth is implied in 'Is'. God is, nothing else is. Therefore the more truthful we are, the nearer we are to God. We *are* only to the extent that we are truthful.

The illustration of hen and her chickens is good. But better still is that of the Lord and His serf. The latter is far from the former because both are mentally so far apart though physically so near. Hence Milton's "mind is its own place"[1] and the *Gita*'s "man is the author of his own freedom or bondage."[2]

It is to realize this freedom that I would have us to labour as pariahs and labourers.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat G N. 1555 Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p 279

[1] *Paradise Lost*, I. 253

[2] "मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बंधमोक्षयोः।" This, however, is not from the *Gita* but from the *Mahabindu Upanishad*

194. LETTER TO BHAU PANSE

July 9, 1932

CHI. BHAU,

I also did not feel happy about the first stanza[1] in our prayer. But on thinking more deeply about it, I realized that reciting it daily with proper understanding of its meaning was useful. Our reason certainly tells us that we are not this physical body, but are the witness who dwells in it. The stanza describes this witness, and then the seeker asserts that he is that witness—the Brahman. Only those who daily strive to become that and loosen the bond of their physical bodies can make such an assertion. Whenever one realizes that one has forgotten one's real nature or is overcome with fear or with the dualities of love and hatred, pleasure and pain, etc., one should remember the qualities of the Brahman and try to become free from the dualities. By so doing, one becomes that on which one daily meditates. We may, therefore, daily recite that stanza with humility and firm aspiration and keep in mind our assertion in all our actions.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6733. Also C.W. 4476 Courtesy: Bhau Panse

195. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

July 9, 1932

CHI. JAMNA,

I got your letter. If you cannot stay at Ranavav during the monsoon, you may certainly go to the Ashram. However, if you do not keep well there, we shall have to think about another place [where you can stay]. I have also a fear that your mental

[1] "Early in the morning I call to mind that Being which is felt in the heart, which is *sat* (the eternal), *chit* (knowledge) and *sukham* (bliss), which is the state reached by perfect men and which is the super-state. I am that immaculate Brahman which ever notes the states of dream, wakefulness and deep sleep, not this body, the compound made of the elements—earth, water, space, light and air."

condition when you live in the Ashram is not the same as when you live elsewhere. You may eat in the Ashram the same food which you eat outside and cooked in the same manner. You may of course make any change in it that may be necessary for your health. I certainly wish that the air and water of the Ashram may suit you. They will certainly suit you some day.

Ask Purushottam to write to me. Let him give a detailed description of how you live there.

You may be said to have formed good relations with your neighbours Let me know for how many days you stayed there and how much you spent.

BAPU

From Gujarati C W 856 Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

196 LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

July 9, 1932

MY DEAR AMTUL,

The monthly irregularity will go, if you will persist in the friction sitz-bath. Thousands of women have benefited by the treatment assisted of course by a simple diet.

Though I wrote[1] to Dr. Sharma, I have not heard from him.

I do not want you to send me your diary book. I simply wanted your day's work. This you have given quite nicely.

Your Urdu writing is quite clear this time. I have been able to decipher every word. It is undoubtedly better than your English. Try to write more and more in Urdu And when you will let me, I too shall write to you in Urdu.

The Government have not yet granted permission for Mirabehn to see me. And if it is not granted, I am afraid I must deny myself the happiness of seeing the others.

But you must not worry.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat G N 248 Also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800 (40)(3), Pt II, p 207

[1] *Vide* p 67.

197. LETTER TO NIRMALABEHN GANDHI

July 9, 1932

DEAR NIMU,

I read your letter to Ramdas. What a fool you are! You do not write to me, nor speak to Narandas about your difficulties and write about them to poor Ramdas! Was it for this that I got you married to Ramdas? Moreover, the teaching in the Ashram is to the effect that a woman should not believe herself to be dependent, weak, should not go on looking to her husband, but should make her own way (in life). Take the instance of Gangadevi. When Totaramji became a pauper, it was Gangadevi who kept up his spirit. Your difficulty is nothing. If there is any need for a boy, Narandas will get one. You should place all your difficulties before Narandas as if he were your father. You certainly have confidence in him. This much is my advice. Do not engage a boy for doing Ashram work. Taking proper care of children I consider to be the work of the Ashram. The responsibility of taking care of children lies with the Ashram. You are doing your duty on behalf of the Ashram. Hence, believe that you have given all the hours to the Ashram. In spite of this, if you require a boy, it is a different matter. You write to me properly. Otherwise I will have to bring you round.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800 (40)(3), Pt. II, p 205

198. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

July 9, 1932

DEAR CHHAGANLAL,

God willing, we shall meet on the 21st. You know well enough things don't always happen as we intend or wish. See, Papa seemed to be on her death-bed, but she recovered. Her husband, Varadachari, was strong and healthy, but he passed away after a brief illness, leaving for Raja a widowed daughter. Papa is his dearest child. She is a strong-willed girl and will bear the

blow with courage. If knowledge sinks deep into the heart, one does not feel the loss beyond one's strength to endure. For the wise are equally unaffected by birth and death. As this recent example of the uncertainty of life was fresh in my mind, I started the letter with "God willing". We shall meet on the 21st if our wish to meet on that date is in accord with His will And even if we don't, we shall be equally thankful.[1]

Ashram letter is sent along with this.

Now this for Ramdas: Nimu's letter and the lines written by you on the blank part of the sheet reached me. There is nothing impolite in your writing on the blank portion. In my opinion it would be impolite not to use that part. Again, in prison we can feel greedy about everything and we should keep up this greed throughout life. This is also a prison in that the body is even a jail. So that it would be well if we can observe all the good rules of this small prison throughout the life. If we cannot observe them, we should admit our weakness to that extent and should try to observe them as far as we can.

I have written to Narandas that after talking with Nimu, he should do what is proper.[2] I have jokingly given a mild rebuke to Nimu.[3] Why does she trouble you? Why did she not write to me direct? Why did she not make matters clear with Narandas? Is it for troubling you here also that she is married to you? Again a girl brought up in the Ashram would not believe herself to be weak or dependent. She would find her way out She would not sit (idly) looking at the face of her husband. What a (good) example Gangadevi had set! Totaramji became a pauper, she kept up his spirits and did not allow his beggarliness to be felt at all. If she does not write to me hereafter she will have to be brought round. I have written to her to this effect. I have expressed my opinion that she should not engage a boy servant to do the Ashram work. A mother who takes proper care of her children is also doing the Ashram work, because so long as Nimu is in the Ashram the responsibility of taking care of the children rests with the Ashram, i.e., Nimu by taking care of the children discharges her duty to the Ashram and so it is equivalent to doing Ashram work. You need not be anxious over it. You have done right in throwing that anxiety on me. At present my letters are being checked. There is no reason why they should do

[1] This paragraph has been collated with the Gujarati in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol 1

[2] *Vide* pp 184-5

[3] *Vide* the preceding item.

so. But are we not prisoners? Hence perhaps my letter may reach the Ashram late. Even in that case there is no cause for anxiety. Your weight must increase. The doctor says that Ramdas can ask for and eat whatever he likes. If milk is necessary, it should be taken. You should not allow the body to become weak. I know your nature. I am also of the same views. But I would not hesitate to take those things which my other companions do not get if I am convinced that my health requires them. It is a different matter if we know that the other companions also need them.

As regards the health of Surendra, some thought has to be given. Does he take wheat at present? His weight must increase. If the energy is maintained there is no reason to add to the weight.

I have sent a Parsi book for Mr. Darbari. I have not paid for it. He may return it when he has done with it. It is a very good book. It contains a full substance of the Zoroastrian ethics. Now Mr. Darbari must be completely recovered.

Devdas is completely recovered. There is nothing settled about (his) transfer. It seems other (prisoners) are where they were lodged.

Prof. Trivedi has sent (me) the writings of (Swami) Vivekananda. I did not send for them. If anyone from your side has sent for the same please let me know so that I may send the same to him.

As regards our activity the latest news is that the Sardar has begun the study of Sanskrit. He has sent for the 24 parts of the Guide to Sanskrit by Satavlekar. The first part will be finished in about three days. Attempts are being made by him to begin spinning. He is also doing the work of making envelopes. You already know that the weight of us three has increased.

We have not received any new books worth reading. Chandulal has sent me the Gondal Reading Series.

If Ramdas has occasion to write to Nimu, he may write a brief purport of what I have written above. So that she may know my views even if my letter reaches her late, or does not reach her at all.

It is surprising there is no letter from you this time.

We three of us remember you all.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

My post is passing through strict scrutiny. In consequence there is every possibility of the *Mimansa* of Maganbhai being lost, so Dahyabhai may bring it if the same is sent to him. He will

personally hand it over to the Superintendent and then there will be no fear of its being lost.

Nevertheless, he must have a copy of it in his possession.

BAPU

[PPS]

I send herewith Mr. Bhansali's letter for your perusal. You will like it. It is not necessary to send it back.

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800 (40) (3), Pt II, pp 275-83 and *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I, p. 284

199. LETTER TO DHIRU

July 9, 1932

DEAR DHIRU,

I do not consider your letter to be clear. You say that there is no difficulty in spinning yarn of 15 counts, and when you reach 30 counts, it is done up. But there is a great difference between yarn of 15 and 30 counts. Do you say that there is no difficulty in spinning yarn up to 30 counts? If you say that, what is the speed for spinning yarn of 30 counts? What is the waste in spinning a *tola* of yarn? What is the speed for spinning yarn of 40 counts? What is the waste after it? What is the reason that there is difficulty in spinning yarn of finer counts? Prabhudas has much faith in you. If you want to fulfil his hopes, you should be engrossed in the spinning-wheel and find out its faults if there be any, and should find out its measure of strength. By spinning on one spindle only, perhaps, yarn of finer quality might be obtained. Also find out whether you can obtain as much yarn upon a spindle by the Magan spinning-wheel, as you would get on a spindle by an ordinary spinning-wheel.

Many Muslims believe in rebirth. There is a great difference between one who tells a falsehood once and one who has formed a habit of telling lies.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40) (3), Pt II, pp 209-11

200. *EDUCATION*[1]

July 10, 1932

I will explain in brief one central idea about education which has been dominating my thoughts as I am writing the history of the Ashram. Some persons see a deficiency in the Ashram, namely, absence of any arrangement for education, that is, for literary education. I also can see this deficiency. But it will probably remain as long as the Ashram lasts. I will not here go into the reasons for that.

People see this deficiency because we do not know the true meaning of education and the right method of acquiring it, or we assume that the existing system of imparting education is the right one. According to me, the present idea of education and the method of imparting and receiving it are both faulty.

True education is that which helps us to know the *atman*, our true self, God and Truth To acquire this knowledge, some persons may feel the need for a study of literature, some for a study of physical sciences and some others for art. But every branch of knowledge should have as its goal knowledge of the self. That is so in the Ashram. We carry on numerous activities with that aim in view. All of them are, in my sense of the term, true education. Those activities can also be carried on without any reference to the goal of knowledge of the self. When they are so carried on, they may serve as a means of livelihood or of something else, but they are not education. In an activity carried on as education, a proper understanding of its meaning, devotion to duty and the spirit of service are necessary. The first necessarily brings about development of the intellect. In doing any piece of work, however small, we should be inspired by a holy aim and, while doing it, we should try to understand the purpose which it will serve and the scientific method of doing it. There is a science of every type of work—whether it be cooking, sanitation, carpentry or spinning. Everybody who does his work with the attitude of a student knows its science or discovers it.

If the inmates of the Ashram understand this, they would see that the Ashram is a great school in which the inmates receive education not for a few hours only but all the time. Every person

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 6/10-7-1932, *vide* the following item.

who lives in the Ashram to attain knowledge of the self—of Truth—is both a teacher and a pupil. He is a teacher in regard to what he knows, and a pupil in regard to anything about which he needs to learn. If we know more than our neighbour about anything, we should willingly share our knowledge with him, and equally willingly receive from him what he knows more than we do. If we thus regularly exchange knowledge with others, we would not feel the absence of teachers, and education would become a painless and spontaneous process. The most important education is the training of character. As we advance in our observance of *yamaniyamas*, our capacity for learning—for knowing Truth—will go on increasing.

What about literary education, then? It is no more a question. The rule for this is the same as for the other activities. The method explained above dispenses with one superstition, namely, that for education we require a separate building known as school and a teacher to teach. When the desire for literary education awakens in us, we should know that we shall have to acquire it through self-help. There is ample scope for this in the Ashram. If I have been able to explain above my idea clearly, literary education should no more be a problem. Those who possess it should take every opportunity to impart it to others and the latter should receive it from them.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M.M U /II

201. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

July 6/10, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter and the other mail. These days I get them very regularly. I had handed over my packet on Monday for being posted and I do not understand why you did not get it till Saturday. In future, you should inspect the postmark on every packet. It is difficult to understand how a letter posted by you there reaches me the next day but what I send from here reaches you after six days.

You need not send me just now the register of hours of work. It will be quite enough if you send it whenever you observe anything special in the figures, or at the most once a month. Among other things, I am sure of this, that when the whole thing has become systematic everybody will do his or her work sincerely and then nobody will feel any burden. If anybody feels a little wor-

ried in his mind, that also will and must disappear. For a sincere person one thing should be enough. Nobody should undertake more than what he can cope with and should wish to do less than what he can. He who attempts to do more than what he is capable of suffers from pride, he is attached to work and its fruit. He who does less than what he can is a thief. By maintaining a register of the hours of work, we can save ourselves from either mistake, maybe without knowing it. I don't say that we shall positively save ourselves, for, if we do not help to keep the register willingly and with full appreciation of its need, we cannot derive the fullest benefit from it.

Did you carefully read Sitala Sahay's letter? I saw nothing objectionable in it. I see no anger in it. If what he writes about Prabhudas is correct, his demand is not unreasonable. But we can decide this justly only in the manner I have explained, that is, by examining his expenses. In such matters, examples of others give us no help. They may serve as a guide, but, when a person gives us an account of his expenses and we can find no fault with it, we must pay him what the account justifies. It is quite possible that such precedents may cause difficulties in future. But we may hope that, since our motives are sincere, we shall escape such difficulties.

He who has protected us up to now will protect us even in future. We shall go on paying as long as we have money. If we have brought His name into disrepute, He will deprive us even of what we have. Whom will we pay then? Sitala Sahay says in his letter that Padma has sent some accounts to you. I suppose they are all right, are they? I also assume that what Sitala Sahay writes about Prabhudas's expenses is correct. If, however, the facts are not as stated by him, it would certainly be necessary to think more about the matter. My opinion, thus, is based on the assumption that the information given by Sitala Sahay in his letter is correct. You do perfectly right in putting all the facts of a case before me. I should go on giving my opinions as long as I can, so that your burden may be lighter.

Nimu has written a letter to Ramdas which he has sent to me. She writes in it about having engaged a boy. She believes that she needs his help, but suspects that you may not have approved of her action. She also says that you have raised no objection. Ramdas has left it to me to do what I think proper. I cannot decide in this matter independently. I am writing a letter[1] to Nimu.

[1] *Vide* p. 178.

Read it and do what you think best. Don't wait for Nimu to speak to you, but go and meet her yourself and put her mind at rest.

If you can, do save Shashi If necessary, you may speak firmly to Ratilal about him.

July 10, 1932

My writing letters has become a serious issue and I do not know when, if at all, you got the last packet of my letters. Nor do I know when you will get this. I have sought clarification about this matter.[1] I cannot say what the outcome will be. "Neither be glad to get what is pleasant, nor be sad to get what is unpleasant"[2].

Today's article[3] is about education. Read it carefully and think over it If you understand it properly, you will have to shoulder one more burden, a mental one this time. Examine carefully every person in your mind, and consider whether all of them fully understand the work which they do Understand and explain to others the meaning and method of every activity in the Ashram. If there is any point which you do not understand ask me. If you question me about anything which I understand, I will answer your question Find out whether everybody gets time to read. You will require some peace of mind to be able to take up this responsibility. As it is, you have been all the time doing a teacher's work, and so this work will not be new for you. I have only widened your sphere. However, my method of teaching is simple. It requires little memorizing to be done Our activities concern rural life, and their science, therefore, is not beyond our capacity. As for literature and similar studies, everybody may get from the books in the library as much as he can and impart it to the others The important thing is development of intellect and understanding the meaning of our quest of truth. If that is understood, the rest will follow. Our contentment then will be boundless We shall have to make no effort to learn patience. We shall have secured the key to all knowledge. We shall wish to know only as much as is necessary for our spiritual progress and for self-realization.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U./I Also C.W 8238. Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Vide* "Letter to E. E. Doyle", pp 174-5.
[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, v. 20
[3] *Vide* pp 182-3.

202. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

July 10, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

I forgot to write about one thing in my letter[1] to you last week, namely, about the time spent in prayers. One should not grudge it or feel bored. Islam enjoins prayers five times a day, and every prayer lasts for not less than 15 minutes and the substance every time is the same. In Christian prayers, one feature is constant, and that also generally takes 15 minutes every time. In the Roman Catholic Church and the Established Church of England no prayer lasts for less than half an hour, and the prayers are held in the morning, in the evening and at noon. Pious men and women do not feel this irksome. In short, none of us has a right to change the established pattern of daily activities in the Ashram, for all of us are imperfect and we have discussed these things long enough. We should now learn to take interest in our activities. We wish to realize God through them and derive our daily sustenance from them. Instead of thinking about making changes in our programme, we should carry it out as best as we can and instil life in our activities. This is how I feel as I think more and more about the matter.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 229. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

203. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

July 10, 1932

The disturbance of my correspondence continues and letters are delayed. Thus we are made to feel now and then that we are prisoners, and we should, since it gives us the opportunity to practise the *Gita* doctrine. When we cannot get what we want, we find out if the deprivation disturbs our peace of mind. If it does, it shows that we have much headway to make up. I therefore try to preserve my equanimity. We may ask only for what we are en-

[1] *Vide* pp 122-3.

titled to. If we get it, it is all right. If we do not get it, then also it is all right. Congratulate Sarojini on her assuming the role of a physician. Tell her also that her sweets were appreciated by many of us. But this should not be construed as a request for further favours of the same kind. Real enjoyment is derived from drops, not from mouthfuls. In my earlier letter too I had written only in jest. Sweets are not the thing for us here as they are for her, whom we dare not imitate. Here we are a servant, a farmer and a porter. If the like of us put on royal robes, the village urchins would pelt stones at us and we should have deserved such treatment. Tell all this to Sarojini Devi if you can tell her without putting her out. Otherwise this lesson may be learnt by your other fellow-prisoners You see how I have mixed instruction with amusement.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp. 284-5

204. LETTER TO KANAIYALAL

July 10, 1932

BHAI KANAIYALAL,

If God is taken to mean Truth then it is possible to see Him directly. It is not correct to take literally the stories regarding Dhruva and others having seen Him. The description given by the poets is a kind of metaphor.[1]

(2) *Vanar* (monkey) must be taken to mean people with monkey-like nature.

(3) The main idea of the Vedas is spiritual wisdom (lit. the knowledge of Brahman).

(4) Practice of truth by means of mind, speech and body is always the best *yajna*. For the present time its practical form is to ply the charkha with altruistic motive.[2]

(5) The true means of (following) religion is the observance of *yamas* and *niyamas*.[3]

(6) See in Chapter II (of the *Gita*) the characteristics of a *sthitaprajna* (one who is firm in judgment and wisdom).

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800 Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I, p 284

[1], [2] & [3] These paragraphs have been collated with the Gujarati in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*.

205. *A LETTER*

July 10, 1932

There is a class of people to which many of us belong. They read and read and read until they almost lose their power of thinking. To such people I suggest that they should stop reading and think over what they have previously read.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 284

206. *HISTORY OF THE SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM*[1]

[July 11, 1932]

INTRODUCTION

Ashram here means a community of men of religion. Looking at the past in the light of the present, I feel that an ashram was a necessary of life for me. As soon as I had a house of my own, my house was an ashram in this sense, for my life as a householder was not one of enjoyment but of duty discharged from day to day.

[1] Gandhiji commenced writing this history in Gujarati in Yeravda Central Prison on April 5, 1932 He worked on it intermittently and wrote the last available instalment on July 11, 1932, though later letters show that the writing continued even after this date On his release, he showed the manuscripts to Kakasaheb Kalelkar and said· "I could not complete this job It badly needs revision. I do not know whether I shall ever complete it It is not fit to be published as it is. I shall give it only when I have revised it" Kakasaheb said that he would have copies made of whatever had been written and took the manuscripts from Gandhiji's hands Since the original could not be traced, Navajivan Publishing House issued *Satyagrahashramno Itihas* in Gujarati in May 1948 from the copy available with Kakasaheb. It was translated into English by Valji G. Desai and published by the Navajivan Publishing House under the title *Ashram Observances in Action* in 1955. The translator has occasionally changed the paragraphing, omitted a sentence or summarized an argument, but otherwise the translation is faithful and is reproduced here. Two paragraphs of the incomplete chapter on satyagraha, which were written on July 11, 1932 and which were omitted in the English version, have been translated from the Gujarati Appendices found in Gujarati and English versions are not reproduced here, since they are placed in their chronological order under the dates February 16, 1916, June 14, 1928 and December 8, 1941. For the first two appendices, *vide* Vol. XIII, pp 225-35 and Vol. XXXVI, pp 398-410.

Again, besides the members of my family I always had some friends or others living with me, whose relation with me was spiritual from the first or became such later on. This went on unconsciously till 1904 when I read Ruskin's *Unto This Last*,[1] which made a deep impression on me. I determined to take *Indian Opinion* into a forest where I should live with the workers as members of my family. I purchased 100 acres of land and founded Phœnix Settlement, which neither we nor anyone else called an ashram. It had a religious basis, but the visible object was purity of body and mind as well as economic equality. I did not then consider *brahmacharya* (chastity) to be essential, on the other hand it was expected that co-workers would live as family men and have children. A brief account of Phœnix will be found in *Satyagraha in South Africa*.[2]

This was the first step.

The second step was taken in 1906. I learnt in the school of experience that *brahmacharya* was a *sine qua non* for a life devoted to service. From this time onward I looked upon Phœnix deliberately as a religious institution. The same year witnessed the advent of satyagraha which was based on religion and implied an unshakable faith in the God of Truth. Religion here should not be understood in a narrow sense, but as that which acts as a link between different religions and realizes their essential unity.

This went on till 1911. All these years the Phœnix Settlement was progressing as an ashram though we did not call it by that name.

We took the third step in 1911. So far only those people lived at Phœnix who were working in the press and the paper. But now as a part of the satyagraha movement we felt the need of an ashram where satyagrahi families could live and lead a religious life. I had already come in contact with my German friend Kallenbach. Both of us were living a sort of ashram life. I was a barrister and Kallenbach an architect. However we led a comparatively very simple life in the sparsely populated country, and were religiously minded. We might commit mistakes out of ignorance, but we were trying to seek the root of every activity in religion Kallenbach purchased a farm of 1,100 acres and the satyagrahi families settled there Religious problems confronted us now at every step and the whole institution was managed from a religious standpoint. Among the settlers there were Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis. But I do not remember that they ever quarrelled with one another, though each was staunch

[1] *Vide* Vol XXXIX, pp. 239-40.

[2] *Vide* Vol XXIX

in his own faith. We respected one another's religion and tried to help everybody to follow his own faith and thus to make spiritual progress.

This institution was not known as Satyagraha Ashram but as Tolstoy Farm. Kallenbach and I were followers of Tolstoy and endeavoured to practise much of his doctrine. Tolstoy Farm was closed in 1912 and the farmers were sent to Phœnix. The history of Tolstoy Farm will also be found in *Satyagraha in South Africa*.[1]

Phœnix now was no longer meant for the workers of *Indian Opinion* only; it was a satyagraha institution. That was only to be expected, for *Indian Opinion* owed its very existence to satyagraha. Still it was a great change. The even tenor of the lives of the settlers at Phœnix was disturbed, and they had now to discern certainty in the midst of uncertainty like the satyagrahis. But they were equal to the new demands made upon them. As at Tolstoy Farm, so also at Phœnix I established a common kitchen which some joined while others had private kitchens of their own. The congregational prayer in the evening played a large part in our lives. And the final satyagraha campaign was started by the inmates of Phœnix Settlement in 1913[2]. The struggle ended in 1914.[3] I left South Africa in July that year. It was decided that all settlers who wanted to go to India should be enabled to go there. Before going to India I had to meet Gokhale in England. The idea was to found a new institution in India for those who went there from Phœnix. And the community life commenced in South Africa was to be continued in India. I reached India early in 1915[4] with a view to establish an ashram though I was still unaware that I would call it by that name.

I toured all parts of India for a year, and visited some institutions[5] from which I had much to learn. I was invited by several cities to establish the ashram in their neighbourhood with a promise of assistance in various ways. Ahmedabad was selected at last. This was the fourth, and I imagine the last step. Whether or not it will always be the last is something of which no forecast is possible.[6] How was the new institution to be named? What should

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIX, pp. 186-207.

[2] On September 15; *vide* Vol. XXIX, pp 222-5.

[3] *Vide* Vol XXIX, pp. 265-9.

[4] On January 9, *vide* Vol. XIII, p. 1.

[5] Servants of India Society, Santiniketan, Gurukul Kangri

[6] Gandhiji disbanded the Satyagraha Ashram in 1933. When he shifted to Segaon in April 1936 he had no intention of establishing an ashram there. However, it gradually developed into the Sevagram Ashram.

be its rules and regulations? On these points I had full discussions and correspondence with friends, as a result of which we decided to call the institution Satyagraha Ashram. It is an appropriate name if we take its object into consideration. My life is devoted to the quest of truth. I would live and, if need be, die in prosecuting it, and of course I would take with me as many fellow-pilgrims as I could get.

The Ashram was established in a rented house at Kochrab on May 25, 1915. Some citizens of Ahmedabad undertook to finance it. At the beginning there were about 20[1] inmates, most of them from South Africa. Of these again the large majority spoke Tamil or Telugu. The chief activity in the Ashram at this time was teaching Sanskrit, Hindi and Tamil to the old as well as the young, who also received some general education. Hand-weaving was the principal industry with some carpentry as accessory to it. No servants were engaged; therefore cooking, sanitation, fetching water—everything was attended to by the Ashramites. Truth and other observances were obligatory on them all.[2] Distinctions of caste were not observed. Untouchability had not only no place in the Ashram, but its eradication from Hindu society was one of our principal objectives. Emancipation of women from some customary bonds was insisted upon from the first. Therefore women in the Ashram enjoy full freedom. Then again it was an Ashram rule that persons following a particular faith should have the same feeling for followers of other faiths as for their co-religionists.

But for one thing I was solely responsible, and I am indebted to the West for it I refer to my dietetic experiments, which commenced in 1888 when I went to England for studies. I always invite members of my family and other co-workers to join in. The experiments were designed to achieve three objects, viz., (1) to acquire control over the palate as a part of self-control in general, (2) to find out which diet was the simplest and the cheapest so that by adopting it we might identify ourselves with the poor; and (3) to discover which diet was necessary for perfect health, as maintenance of health is largely dependent upon correct diet.

If in England I had not been under a vow to be a vegetarian, I might perhaps never have undertaken experiments in diet. But once I began to experiment, these three objectives took me into

[1] In Vol XIII, p 98, however, Gandhiji mentions the number as 35

[2] For the text of the draft constitution of the Ashram, *vide* Vol XIII, pp. 91-7, and for the final constitution, *vide* Vol XXXVI, pp. 398-410.

deeper waters, and I was led to make various kinds of experiments. And the Ashram too joined in, though these experiments were not a part of Ashram discipline.

The reader has perhaps now seen that the Ashram set out to remedy what it thought were defects in our national life from the religious, economic and political standpoints As we gathered new experiences we undertook fresh activities. Even now I cannot say that the Ashram has embarked on all possible activities that I can think of. There have been two limitations. First, we were sure we must cut our coat according to our cloth, that is, we must manage with what funds were placed at our disposal by friends without any special effort in collection. Secondly we should not go in search of new spheres of activity, but if any activity naturally suggested itself to our minds, we should go in for it without counting the cost.

These two limitations spring from a religious attitude. This implies faith in God, that is, doing everything in dependence upon and under the inspiration of God The man of religion conducts such activities as are sent by God with such resources as God places at his disposal. He never lets us see that He Himself does anything, He achieves His aims through men inspired by Him. When help was received from unexpected quarters or from friends without our asking for it, my faith led me to believe that it was sent by God. Similarly when some activity came to us unsought so that not to take it up would have been sheer cowardice, laziness or the like, I thought it was a godsend.

The same principle applies to co-workers as to material resources and to activities. We may have the funds and know how they are to be used, but we can do nothing in the absence of co-workers. Co-workers also should come unsought. We did not merely imagine but had a living faith that the Ashram was God's. If therefore He wished to make the Ashram His instrument as regards any activity, it was for Him to place the requisite men and munitions at the Ashram's disposal. Phœnix, Tolstoy Farm and Sabarmati Ashram have all been conducted more or less according to these principles consciously or unconsciously. Ashram rules were observed at first with some laxity, but the observance has become stricter from day to day.

The Ashram population doubled itself in a few months. Again the Kochrab bungalow was a hardly suitable building for an ashram. It would do for one well-to-do family, but not for sixty men, women and children engaged in various activities and observing *brahmacharya* and other vows. However we had to manage

with what building was available. But very soon it became impossible to live in it for a number of reasons. As if God wanted to drive us out of it, we had suddenly to go out in search of a new site and to vacate the bungalow. The curious will look up the *Autobiography*[1] for an account of these events There was one defect in the Ashram at Kochrab which was remedied after we had removed to Sabarmati. An Ashram without orchard, farm or cattle would not be a complete unit. At Sabarmati we had cultivable land and therefore went in for agriculture at once.

Such is the prehistory and history of the Ashram. I now propose to deal with its observances and activities in so far as I remember them. My diary is not at hand. Even if it is, it takes no note of the personal history of the Ashramites. I therefore depend upon memory alone. This is nothing new for me, as *Satyagraha in South Africa* and the *Autobiography* were written in the same manner. The reader will please bear this limitation in mind, as he goes through these pages.

I

TRUTH

Whenever someone was found telling a lie in the Ashram, effective steps were taken to deal with the situation as symptomatic of a serious disease. The Ashram does not believe in punishing wrongdoers, so much so that hesitation is felt even in asking them to leave the institution. Three lines of preventive action were therefore adopted.

The first thing attended to was the purity of the principal workers in charge, the idea being that if they were free from fault, the atmosphere about them was bound to be affected by their innocence. Untruth cannot stand before truth like darkness before the light of the sun.

Secondly, we had recourse to confession. If someone was found practising untruth, the fact was brought to the notice of the congregation. This is a very useful measure if it is judiciously adopted. But one has to be careful about two things. The public confession must not be tainted by even a trace of force, and the confession should not lead to the person confessing taking leave of all sense of shame. If he comes to believe that mere confession has washed off his sin, he is no nonger ashamed of it at all. There should be an ever present consciousness of the fact that the least little untruth is a dangerous thing.

[1] *Vide* Vol XXXIX, pp. 314-7 and 340.

Thirdly, the worker in charge of the Ashram as well as the wrongdoer would fast as a matter of penance. Of course it is a matter for the wrongdoer himself to decide whether or not he should undertake a fast. But as for the worker in charge, he is clearly responsible for intentional and unintentional wrongdoing in his institution. Untruth is more poisonous and more subtle than any poison gas whatever, but it dare not enter where the head of the institution is wide awake and has a spiritual outlook on life. Still if it is found to have effected an entrance, it is a warning to the principal worker, who may be sure that he must bear his share of responsibility for this infection. I for one believe that spiritual acts have clearly defined results precisely like combinations or processes in the natural sciences Only as we have no such means of measurement in the former case as in the latter, we are not ready to believe or we only half-heartedly believe in the spiritual influences. Again, we are inclined to be lenient to ourselves with the result that our experiments are unsuccessful and we tend to move only in a circle like the oil-miller's bullock Thus untruth gets a long lease of life, and at last we reach the melancholy conclusion that it is unavoidable. And what is unavoidable easily becomes necessary, so that not truth but untruth increases its own prestige.

When therefore untruth was discovered in the Ashram, I readily pleaded guilty for it myself. That is to say, I have not still attained truth as defined by me. It may be due to ignorance, but it is clear that I have not fully understood truth and therefore neither even thought it out nor declared it, still less practised it. But granting all this, was I to leave the Ashram, and resort to some Himalayan cave and impose silence upon myself? That would be sheer cowardice. The quest of truth cannot be prosecuted in a cave. Silence makes no sense where it is necessary to speak. One may live in a cave in certain circumstances, but the common man can be tested only in society.

What then is the remedy to be tried to get rid of untruth? The only answer which suggests itself to me is bodily penance, that is fasting and the like. Bodily penance has a threefold influence, first over the penitent, secondly over the wrongdoer and thirdly over the congregation. The penitent becomes more alert, examines the innermost recesses of his own heart and takes steps to deal with any personal weakness that he may discover. If the wrongdoer has any pity, he becomes conscious of his own fault, is ashamed of it and resolves never to sin any more in the future. The congregation takes a course of self-introspection.

But bodily penance is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. By itself it cannot bring an erring person to the right path. It is profitable only if it is accompanied by a certain line of thinking, which is as follows.

Man tends to become a slave of his own body, and engages in many activities and commits many sins for the sake of physical enjoyment. He should therefore mortify the flesh whenever there is an occasion of sin. A man given to physical enjoyment is subject to delusion Even a slight renunciation of enjoyment in the shape of food will probably be helpful in breaking the power of that delusion. Fasting in order to produce this effect must be taken in its widest sense as the exercise of control over all the organs of sense with a view to the purification of oneself or others. Merely giving up food does not amount to a fast. And fasting for health is no fasting at all in this sense.

I have also found that frequent fasting tends to rob it of its efficacy, for then it becomes almost a mechanical process without any background of thought Every fast therefore should be undertaken after due deliberation.

I have noted one special effect of fasting in my own case. I have fasted frequently, therefore my co-workers are nervous and are afraid that a fresh fast may place my life in danger. This fear makes them observe certain rules. I consider this an undesirable consequence of fasting. I do not however think that self-control practised on account of such fear does any harm. This fear is inspired by love, and therefore it is a good thing if a person steers clear of wrongdoing even under the influence of such fear. Deliberate and voluntary reformation is of course very desirable, but it is only to be welcomed if a person avoids sin because he is afraid of causing pain to elders, as it involves no use of brute force There are many cases of reformation undertaken primarily only to please one's dear ones becoming a permanent feature of men's lives.

One painful consequence of fasting must be taken into account People sometimes do not avoid sin but only try to hide it for fear that someone else may fast if he comes to know of it.

I hold that penance is necessary in certain cases and it has benefited the Ashram on the whole But one who undertakes it must possess certain qualifications

1. The wrongdoer should have love for the penitent. The penitent may have love for the wrongdoer, but if the wrongdoer is unaware of it or adopts an inimical attitude towards the penitent, penance for him is out of the question. As he regards himself as

an enemy of the penitent, he hates the latter. There is therefore a possibility of the fast affecting him in a manner contrary to all expectations, or acting as brute force employed against him and thus regarded by him as a form of coercion. Moreover, if everyone is supposed to be entitled to undertake penance for the failings of others who do not stand in a special relation to him, there would be no end to the programme of penance Penance for the sins of the whole world might befit a mahatma (great soul), but here we are concerned with the common man.

2. The penitent himself must be one of the parties wronged. That is to say, one should not do penance for a failing with which he is not in any way concerned. Thus, suppose A and B are friends. B is a member of the Ashram, but A has nothing to do with it. B has wronged the Ashram. Here A has neither the duty nor the right to undertake a penance for B's fault. His interference might even complicate the situation both for the Ashram and B. He may not even possess the necessary material to pronounce a judgment on B's conduct. By agreeing to B's admission to the Ashram, A must be regarded as having transferred to the Ashram his responsibility for B's good conduct.

3. A penitent for another's wrongdoing must himself be guiltless of similar misconduct. "The pot may not call the kettle black."

4. The penitent must otherwise also be a man of purity and appear such to the wrongdoer. Penance for another's wrongdoing presupposes purity; and if the guilty man has no respect for the penitent, the latter's fast might easily have an unhealthy effect upon him.

5. The penitent must not have any personal interest to serve. Thus, if A has promised to pay B ten rupees, non-payment of it is a fault. But B may not perform penance for A's failure to redeem his promise.

6. The penitent must not have any anger in him. If a father commences a fast in anger for a fault of his son, that is not penance. There should be nothing but compassion in penance, the object being the purification of oneself as well as of the guilty person.

7. The wrong act must be patent, accepted as such by all and spiritually harmful, and the doer must be aware of its nature. There should be no penance for inferential guilt, as it might at times have dangerous consequences. There should be no room for doubt as regards the fault. Moreover, one should not do penance for an act which he alone regards as wrong. It is possible that what one holds to be wrong today he might regard as innocent tomorrow. So the wrong must be one that is accepted as

such by society. For instance, I might regard the non-wearing of khadi to be very wrong. But my co-worker might see nothing wrong in it, or might not attach much importance to it, and so might or might not wear it as he wishes. If I regard this as a wrong and fast for it, that is not penance but coercion. There can be no penance also where the wrongdoer is not conscious of having done anything wrong.

The discussion of this topic is necessary for an institution in which there is no place for punishment or which always strives to act in a religious spirit. In such institutions the penance on the part of the heads of the Ashram takes the place of penal measures. It would be impossible to maintain its purity in any other way. Punishment and disciplinary action might make for an outer show of orderliness and progress, but that is all. On the other hand penance preserves the institution both internally and externally and makes the institution firmer day by day. Hence the necessity for some such rules as those given above.

Fasts and such other penance have been undertaken in the Ashram Still it is far, far indeed, from its ideal of truth, and therefore, as we shall see later on, we now call it by the name of Udyoga Mandir (Temple of Industry). But we can certainly say that the men in charge of the Ashram are wide awake, fully conscious of their imperfections and constantly trying to make sure that untruth does not find a foothold anywhere. But in an institution to which new members are being admitted from time to time, and that too only on trust, and which is frequented by men from all provinces of India and some foreign countries, it is no easy thing to keep all of them on the strait and narrow path. But if only the men at the top are true to themselves, the Ashram is sure to stand the test, no matter how hard it is. There is no limit to the potency of truth, as there is a limit to the power of an individual seeker. But if he is wide awake and is striving constantly, there is no limit to his power as well

II

PRAYER

(1)

If insistence on truth constitutes the root of the Ashram, prayer is the principal feeder of that root The social (as distinguished from the individual) activities of the Ashram commence every day with the congregational morning worship at 4.15 to 4.45 a m. and close with the evening prayer at 7 to 7.30 p.m. Ever since

the Ashram was founded, not a single day has passed to my knowledge without this worship I know of several occasions when owing to the rains only one responsible person was present on the prayer ground All inmates are expected to attend the worship except in the case of illness or similar compelling reason for absence. This expectation has been fairly well fulfilled at the evening prayer, but not in the morning.

The time for morning worship was as a matter of experiment fixed at 4, 5, 6 and 7 a.m., one after another. But on account of my persistently strong attitude on the subject, it has been fixed at last at 4 20 a.m. With the first bell at 4 everyone rises from bed and after a wash reaches the prayer ground by 4.20.

I believe that in a country like India the sooner a man rises from bed the better. Indeed millions must necessarily rise early. If the peasant is a late riser, his crops will suffer damage. Cattle are attended to and cows are milked early in the morning. Such being the case, seekers of saving truth, servants of the people or monks may well be up at 2 or 3; it would be surprising if they are not In all countries of the world devotees of God and tillers of the soil rise early. Devotees take the name of God and peasants work in their fields serving the world as well as themselves. To my mind both are worshippers. Devotees are deliberately such while cultivators by their industry worship God unawares, as it helps to sustain the world. If instead of working in the fields, they took to religious meditation, they would be failing in their duty and involving themselves and the world in ruin.

We may or may not look upon the cultivator as a devotee, but where peasants, labourers and other people have willy nilly to rise early, how can a worshipper of Truth or servant of the people be a late riser? Again in the Ashram we are trying to co-ordinate work and worship Therefore I am definitely of opinion that all able-bodied people in the Ashram must rise early even at the cost of inconvenience. Four a.m. is not early but the latest time when we must be up and doing.

Then again we had to take a decision on certain questions. Where should the prayers be offered? Should we erect a temple or meet in the open air? Then again, should we raise a platform or sit in the sands or the dust? Should there be any images? At last we decided to sit on the sands under the canopy of the sky and not to install any image. Poverty is an Ashram observance. The Ashram exists in order to serve the starving millions. The poor have a place in it no less than others. It receives with open arms all who are willing to keep the rules. In such an institution the

house of worship cannot be built with bricks and mortar, the sky must suffice for roof and the quarters for walls and pillars. A platform was planned but discarded later on, as its size would depend upon the indeterminate number of worshippers And a big one would cost a large sum of money. Experience has shown the soundness of the decision not to build a house or even a platform. People from outside also attend the Ashram prayers, so that at times the multitude present cannot be accommodated on the biggest of platforms.

Again as the Ashram prayers are being increasingly imitated elsewhere, the sky-roofed temple has proved its utility Morning and evening prayers are held wherever I go Then there is such large attendance, especially in the evening, that prayers are possible only on open grounds. And if I had been in the habit of worshipping in a prayer hall only, I might perhaps never have thought of public prayers during my tours.

Then again all religions are accorded equal respect in the Ashram Followers of all faiths are welcome there, they may or may not believe in the worship of images. No image is kept at the congregational worship of the Ashram in order to avoid hurting anybody's feelings But if an Ashramite wishes to keep an image in his room, he is free to do so

(ii)

At the morning prayer we first recite the *shlokas* (verses) printed in *Ashram Bhajanavali*[1] (hymnal), and then sing one *bhajan* (hymn) followed by *Ramdhun* (repetition of Ramanama) and *Gitapath* (recitation of the *Gita*). In the evening we have recitation of the last 19 verses of the second chapter of the *Gita*, one *bhajan* and *Ramdhun* and then read some portion of a sacred book

The *shlokas* were selected by Shri Kaka Kalelkar who has been in the Ashram since its foundation. Shri Maganlal Gandhi met him in Santiniketan, when he and the children of the Phœnix Settlement went there from South Africa while I was still in England Dinabandhu Andrews and the late Mr. Pearson were then in Santiniketan. I had advised Maganlal to stay at some place selected by Andrews. And Andrews selected Santiniketan for the party. Kaka was a teacher there and came into close contact with Maganlal Maganlal had been feeling the want of a Sanskrit teacher which was supplied by Kaka. Chintamani Shastri assisted him in the work Kaka taught the children how to

[1] *Vide* Vol XLIV

recite the verses repeated in prayer. Some of these verses were omitted in the Ashram prayer in order to save time. Such is the history of the verses recited at the morning prayer all these days.

The recitation of these verses has often been objected to on the ground of saving time or because it appeared to some people that they could not well be recited by a worshipper of truth or by a non-Hindu. There is no doubt that these verses are recited only in Hindu society, but I cannot see why a non-Hindu may not join in or be present at the recitation. Muslim and Christian friends who have heard the verses have not raised any objection. Indeed they need not cause annoyance to anyone who respects other faiths as much as he respects his own. They do not contain any reflection on other people Hindus being in an overwhelming majority in the Ashram, the verses must be selected from the sacred books of the Hindus. Not that nothing is sung or recited from non-Hindu scriptures. Indeed there were occasions on which Imam Saheb recited verses from the Koran. Muslim and Christian hymns are often sung.

But the verses were strongly attacked from the standpoint of truth. An Ashramite modestly but firmly argued that the worship of Sarasvati, Ganesh and the like was violence done to truth; for no such divinities really existed as Sarasvati seated on a lotus with a *vina* (kind of musical instrument) in her hands, or as Ganesh with a big belly and an elephant's trunk. To this argument I replied as follows:

'I claim to be a votary of truth, and yet I do not mind reciting these verses or teaching them to the children. If we condemn some *shlokas* on the strength of this argument, it would be tantamount to an attack on the very basis of Hinduism. Not that we may not condemn anything in Hinduism which is fit for condemnation, no matter how ancient it is. But I do not believe that this is a weak or vulnerable point of Hinduism. On the other hand I hold that it is perhaps characteristic of our faith. Sarasvati and Ganesh are not independent entities. They are all descriptive names of one God. Devoted poets have given a local habitation and a name to His countless attributes. They have done nothing wrong. Such verses deceive neither the worshippers nor others. When a human being praises God he imagines Him to be such as he thinks fit. The God of his imagination is there for him. Even when we pray to a God devoid of form and attributes we do in fact endow Him with attributes. And attributes too are form. Fundamentally God is indescribable in words. We mortals must of necessity depend upon the imagination which makes and sometimes

mars us too. The qualities we attribute to God with the purest of motives are true for us but fundamentally false, because all attempts at describing Him must be unsuccessful I am intellectually conscious of this and still I cannot help dwelling upon the attributes of God. My intellect can exercise no influence over my heart. I am prepared to admit that my heart in its weakness hankers after a God with attributes. The *shlokas* which I have been reciting every day for the last fifteen years give me peace and hold good for me. In them I find beauty as well as poetry Learned men tell many stories about Sarasvati, Ganesh and the like, which have their own use. I do not know their deeper meaning, as I have not gone into it, finding it unnecessary for me It may be that my ignorance is my salvation. I did not see that I needed to go deep into this as a part of my quest of truth. It is enough that I know my God, and although I have still to realize His living presence, I am on the right path to my destination '

I could hardly expect that the objectors should be satisfied with this reply. An *ad hoc* committee examined the whole question fully and finally recommended that the *shlokas* should remain as they were, for every possible selection would be viewed with disfavour by someone or other.

(iii)

A hymn was sung after the *shlokas*. Indeed singing hymns was the only item of the prayers in South Africa The *shlokas* were added in India Maganlal Gandhi was our leader in song But we felt that the arrangement was unsatisfactory. We should have an expert singer for the purpose, and that singer should be one who would observe the Ashram rules One such was found in Narayan Moreshwar Khare, a pupil of Pandit Vishnu Digambar, whom the master kindly sent to the Ashram Pandit Khare gave us full satisfaction and is now a full member of the Ashram. He made hymn-singing interesting, and the *Ashram Bhajanavali* (hymnal) which is now read by thousands was in the main compiled by him. He introduced *Ramdhun*, the third item of our prayers.

The fourth item is recitation of verses from the *Gita*. The *Gita* has for years been an authoritative guide to belief and conduct for the Satyagraha Ashram. It has provided us with a test with which to determine the correctness or otherwise of ideas and courses of conduct in question. Therefore we wished that all Ashramites should understand the meaning of the *Gita* and if possible commit it to memory. If this last was not possible, we wished that they should at least read the original Sanskrit with correct pro-

nunciation. With this end in view we began to recite part of the *Gita* every day We would recite a few verses every day and continue the recitation until we had learnt them by heart. From this we proceeded to the *parayan*[1]. And the recitation is now so arranged that the whole of the *Gita* is finished in fourteen days, and everybody knows what verses will be recited on any particular day. The first chapter is recited on every alternate Friday, and we shall come to it on Friday next (June 10, 1932). The seventh and eighth, the twelfth and thirteenth, the fourteenth and fifteenth, and the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters are recited on the same day in order to finish 18 chapters in 14 days.[2]

At the evening prayer we recite the last 19 verses of the second chapter of the *Gita* as well as sing a hymn and repeat Ramanama. These verses describe the characteristics of the *sthitaprajna* (the man of stable understanding), which a satyagrahi too must acquire, and are recited in order that he may constantly bear them in mind.

Repeating the same thing at prayer from day to day is objected to on the ground that it thus becomes mechanical and tends to be ineffective. It is true that the prayer becomes mechanical. We ourselves are machines, and if we believe God to be our mover, we must behave like machines in His hands. If the sun and other heavenly bodies did not work like machines, the universe would come to a standstill. But in behaving like machines, we must not behave like inert matter. We are intelligent beings and must observe rules as such. The point is not whether the contents of the prayer are always the same or differ from day to day. Even if they are full of variety, it is possible that they will become ineffective. The Gayatri verse among Hindus, the confession of faith (*kalma*) among Mussalmans, the typical Christian prayer in the Sermon on the Mount have been recited by millions for centuries every day; and yet their power has not diminished but is ever on the increase. It all depends upon the spirit behind the recitation. If an unbeliever or a parrot repeats these potent words, they will fall quite flat. On the other hand when a believer utters them always, their influence grows from day to day. Our staple food is the same. The wheat-eater will take other things besides wheat, and these additional things may differ from time to time, but the

[1] Regular recitation

[2] The translator supplies the following information: "Later on the *Gita* recitation was finished every seven instead of every fourteen days, and the chapters were distributed among the days as follows. Friday, 1 and 2, Saturday, 3, 4 and 5, Sunday, 6, 7 and 8; Monday, 9, 10, 11 and 12; Tuesday, 13, 14 and 15, Wednesday, 16 and 17; Thursday, 18."

wheat bread will always be there on the dining table. It is the eater's staff of life, and he will never weary of it If he conceives a dislike for it, that is a sign of the approaching dissolution of his body. The same is the case with prayer Its principal contents must be always the same. If the soul hungers after them, she will not quarrel with the monotony of the prayer but will derive nourishment from it. She will have a sense of deprivation on the day that it has not been possible to offer prayer. She will be more downcast than one who observes a physical fast. Giving up food may now and then be beneficial for the body, indigestion of prayer for the soul is something never heard of.

The fact is that many of us offer prayer without our soul being hungry for it It is a fashion to believe that there is a soul; so we believe that she exists. Such is the sorry plight of many among us. Some are intellectually convinced that there is a soul, but they have not grasped that truth with the heart, therefore they do not feel the need for prayer. Many offer prayer because they live in society and think they must participate in its activities No wonder they hanker after variety. As a matter of fact however they do not *attend* prayer. They want to enjoy the music or are merely curious or wish to listen to the sermon. They are not there to be one with God.

(iv)

Prarthana (Gujarati word for prayer) literally means to ask for something, that is, to ask God for something in a spirit of humility. Here it is not used in that sense, but in the sense of praising or worshipping God, meditation and self-purification

But who is God? God is not some person outside ourselves or away from the universe. He pervades everything, and is omniscient as well as omnipotent. He does not need any praise or petitions. Being immanent in all beings, He hears everything and reads our innermost thoughts. He abides in our hearts and is nearer to us than the nails are to the fingers. What is the use of telling Him anything?

It is in view of this difficulty that *prarthana* is further paraphrased as self-purification. When we speak out aloud at prayer time, our speech is addressed not to God but to ourselves, and is intended to shake off our torpor. Some of us are intellectually aware of God, while others are afflicted by doubt None has seen Him face to face We desire to recognize and realize Him, to become one with Him, and seek to gratify that desire through prayer.

This God whom we seek to realize is Truth. Or to put it in another way Truth is God. This Truth is not merely the truth we are expected to speak. It is That which alone is, which constitutes the stuff of which all things are made, which subsists by virtue of its own power, which is not supported by anything else but supports everything that exists. Truth alone is eternal, everything else is momentary. It need not assume shape or form. It is pure intelligence as well as pure bliss. We call It Ishvara because everything is regulated by Its will. It and the law It promulgates are one. Therefore it is not a blind law. It governs the entire universe. To propitiate this Truth is *prarthana* which in effect means an earnest desire to be filled with the spirit of Truth. This desire should be present all the twenty-four hours. But our souls are too dull to have this awareness day and night. Therefore we offer prayers for a short time in the hope that a time will come when all our conduct will be one continuously sustained prayer.

Such is the ideal of prayer for the Ashram, which at present is far, far away from it. The detailed programme outlined above is something external, but the idea is to make our very hearts prayerful. If the Ashram prayers are not still attractive, if even the inmates of the Ashram attend them under compulsion of a sort, it only means that none of us is still a man of prayer in the real sense of the term.

In heartfelt prayer the worshipper's attention is concentrated on the object of worship so much so that he is not conscious of anything else besides. The worshipper has well been compared to a lover. The lover forgets the whole world and even himself in the presence of the beloved. The identification of the worshipper with God should be closer still. It comes only after much striving, self-suffering (*tapas*) and self-discipline. In a place which such a worshipper sanctifies by his presence, no inducements need be offered to people for attending prayers, as they are drawn to the house of prayer by the force of his devotion.

We have dealt so far with congregational prayer, but great stress is also laid in the Ashram on individual and solitary prayer. One who never prays by himself may attend congregational prayers but will not derive much advantage from them. They are absolutely necessary for a congregation, but as a congregation is made up of individuals, they are fruitless without individual prayers. Every member of the Ashram is therefore reminded now and then that he should of his own accord give himself up to self-introspection at all times of the day. No watch can be kept that he does this, and no account can be maintained of such silent prayer.

I cannot say how far it prevails in the Ashram, but I believe that some are making more or less effort in that direction

III

AHIMSA OR LOVE

The greatest difficulties perhaps were encountered as regards the observance of ahimsa. There are problems of Truth, but it is not very hard to understand what Truth is. But in understanding ahimsa we every now and then find ourselves out of our depth. Ahimsa was discussed in the Ashram at greater length than any other subject. Even now the question often arises whether a particular act is violent or non-violent. And even if we know the distinction between violence and non-violence, we are often unable to satisfy the demand of non-violence on account of weakness which cannot easily be overcome.

Ahimsa means not to hurt any living creature by thought, word or deed, even for the supposed benefit of that creature. To observe this principle fully is impossible for men, who kill a number of living beings large and small as they breathe or blink or till the land. We catch and hurt snakes or scorpions for fear of being bitten and leave them in some out-of-the-way place if we do not kill them. Hurting them in this way may be unavoidable, but is clearly *himsa* as defined above.

If I save the food I eat or the clothes I wear or the space I occupy, it is obvious that these can be utilized by someone else whose need is greater than mine. As my selfishness prevents him from using these things, my physical enjoyment involves violence to my poorer neighbour When I eat cereals and vegetables in order to support life, that means violence done to vegetable life.

Surrounded thus as I am by violence on all sides, how am I to observe non-violence? Fresh difficulties are bound to arise at every step as I try to do so.

The violence described above is easily recognized as such. But what about our being angry with one another? A teacher inflicting corporal punishment on his pupils, a mother taking her children to task, a man losing his temper in his intercourse with equals, all these are guilty of violence, and violence of a bad type, which is not easy to tackle. Violence is there where there is attachment on the one hand and dislike on the other. How are we to get rid of it?

The first lesson therefore that we in the Ashram must learn is that although to sever some person's head from his body for the sake of the country or the family or oneself is indeed a violent act

the subtle violence involved in injuring the feelings of other people day in and day out is possibly very much worse than that. Murders committed in the world will seem to be numerous when considered by themselves and not so numerous when compared with the number of deaths due to other causes, but the subtle violence involved in daily loss of temper and the like defies all attempts at calculation

We are constantly striving in the Ashram to deal with all these kinds of violence. All of us realize our own weakness. All of us including myself are afraid of snakes, for instance We therefore as a rule catch them and put them out of harm's way. But if someone kills a snake out of fear, he is not taken to task. There was once a snake in the cowshed, and it was impossible to catch it where it was. It was a risky thing to keep the cattle there, the men also were afraid of working thereabouts. Maganlal Gandhi felt helpless and permitted them to kill that snake. I approved of his action when he told me about it. I believe that even if I had been there on the spot, I could not have done anything other than what he did. My intellect tells me that I must treat even a snake as my kinsman and at the risk of losing my life I must hold the snake in my hands and take it away from those who are afraid of it. But in my heart I do not harbour the necessary love, fearlessness and readiness to die of snake-bite. I am trying to cultivate all these qualities but have not still succeeded in the attempt. It is possible that if I am attacked by a snake, I may neither resist nor kill it. But I am not willing to place anyone else's life in danger.

Once in the Ashram the monkeys made a terrible nuisance of themselves and did extensive damage to the crops. The watchman tried to frighten them by making a show of hurling stones from a sling but in vain. He then actually threw stones and injured and crippled one of the monkeys. I thought this even worse than killing it I therefore held discussions with co-workers in the Ashram, and finally we took the decision that if we could not get rid of the monkeys by gentle means short of wounding them, we must kill one or two of them and end the nuisance. Before this decision was taken there was a public discussion in the columns of *Navajivan* which may be consulted by the curious.[1]

No one outside India thinks that one should not kill even a violent animal. Some individuals like St. Francis observed this rule, but the common people did not, so far as I am aware. The Ashram

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXXVII, pp. 32-3 and Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 72-3.

believes in the principle, but it is a pity that we have not succeeded in putting it into practice We have not still acquired the art of doing this. It is possible that many men will have to lay down their lives before this art is mastered For the present it is only a consummation devoutly to be wished for. The principle has long been accepted in India but the practice is very imperfect on account of our laziness and self-deception

Mad dogs are killed in the Ashram, the idea being that they die after much suffering and never recover Our people torture mad dogs instead of killing them and deceive themselves into thinking that they observe non-violence As a matter of fact they only indulge in greater violence.

Non-violence sometimes calls upon us to put an end to the life of a living being. For instance a calf in the Ashram dairy was lame and had developed terrible sores; it could not eat and breathed with difficulty. After three days' argument with myself and my co-workers, I had poison injected into its body and thus put an end to its life [1] That action was non-violent, because it was wholly unselfish inasmuch as the sole purpose was to achieve the calf's relief from pain It was a surgical operation, and I should do exactly the same thing with my child, if he were in the same predicament.

Many Hindus were shocked at this, but their reaction to the incident only betrays their ignorance of the nature of ahimsa, which has for us long ceased to be a living faith, and has been degraded into formalities complied with when not very inconvenient.

Here we must take leave of the Ashram experiments with ahimsa as regards sub-human species.

Ahimsa as regards sub-human life is from the Ashram point of view an important aspect but still only one aspect of this comprehensive principle. Our dealings with our fellow-men are still more important than that. The commonest form of human intercourse is either violent or non-violent. Fortunately for humanity non-violence pervades human life and is observed by men without special effort. If we had not borne with one another, mankind would have been destroyed long ago. Ahimsa would thus appear to be the law of life, but we are not thus far entitled to any credit for observing it.

Whenever there is a clash of ephemeral interests, men tend to resort to violence. But with a deliberate observance of non-violence a person experiences a second birth or 'conversion'. We in

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXXVII, pp 310-5 and Vol XXXVIII, pp 139-40

the Ashram are out to observe ahimsa intelligently. In so doing we meet with numerous obstacles, disappointments and trials of faith. We may not be satisfied with observing ahimsa in deed only. Not to think badly of anyone, not to wish ill to him though we have suffered at his hands, not to hurt him even in thought,—this is an uphill task, but therein lies the acid test of our ahimsa

Thieves have visited the Ashram from outside, and there have been thieves in the Ashram itself But we do not believe in inflicting punishment on them We do not inform the police, we put up with the losses as best we may. This rule has been infringed at times. A thief was once caught red-handed by day. The Ashramite who caught him bound him with a rope and treated him contemptously. I was in the Ashram at the time I went to the thief, rebuked him and set him free. But as a matter of fact ahimsa demands from us something more than this. We must find out and apply methods which would put a stop to thieving altogether. For one thing we must diminish the number of our 'possessions' so as not to tempt others. Secondly we must bring about a reformation in the surrounding villages. And thirdly the Ashram ministry should be extended in scope so that the bad as well as the good would learn to look upon the Settlement as their own.

We thus find that it is impossible for a man with 'possessions' to observe ahimsa even in the gross meaning of that term A man of property must adopt measures for its security involving the punishment of whoever tries to steal it. Only he can observe ahimsa who holds nothing as his own and works away in a spirit of total detachment. If there are many such individuals and organizations in society, violence will not be much in evidence. As gun-powder has a large place in a society based on violence and a soldier who can handle it with skill becomes entitled to honour and rewards, even so in a non-violent society self-suffering and self-control are its 'munitions of war', and persons endowed with these qualities are its natural protectors. The world at large has not still accepted ahimsa in this sense. India has accepted it more or less but not in a comprehensive manner. The Ashram holds that ahimsa should be universal in scope, and that society can be built up on the foundations of ahimsa It conducts experiments with this end in view, but these have not been very successful. I have been unable to cite in this chapter much that would hearten the votary of ahimsa. This does not apply of course to ahimsa as applied to politics, to which I propose to devote a separate chapter[1].

[1] This remained unwritten.

IV

BRAHMACHARYA OR CHASTITY

This observance does not give rise to ever so many problems and dilemmas as ahimsa does. Its meaning is generally well understood, but understanding it is one thing, practising it is quite another thing and calls forth all our powers. Many of us put forth a great effort but without making any progress. Some of us even lost ground previously won. None has reached perfection But everyone realizes its supreme importance. My striving in this direction began before 1906 when I took the vow. There were many ups and downs. It was only after I had burnt my fingers at times that I realized the deeper meaning of *brahmacharya*. And then I found that expositions made in books cannot be understood without actual experience, and wear a fresh aspect in the light of it. Even in the case of a simple machine like the spinning-wheel, it is one thing to read the directions for plying it, and it is another thing to put the directions into practice. New light dawns upon us as soon as we commence our practice And what is true of simple tangible things like the wheel is still more true of spiritual states.

A *brahmachari* is one who controls his organs of sense in thought, word and deed. The meaning of this definition became somewhat clear after I had kept the observance for some time, but it is not quite clear even now, for I do not claim to be a perfect *brahmachari*, evil thoughts having been held in restraint but not eradicated. When they are eradicated, I will discover further implications of the definition.

Ordinary *brahmacharya* is not so difficult as it is supposed to be. We have made it difficult by understanding the term in a narrow sense Many of us play with *brahmacharya* like fools who put their hands in the fire and still expect to escape being burnt. Very few realize that a *brahmachari* has to control not one but all the organs of sense He is no *brahmachari* who thinks that mere control of animal passion is the be-all and end-all of *brahmacharya* No wonder if he finds it very difficult. He who attempts to control only one organ and allows all the others free play must not expect to achieve success. He might as well deliberately descend into a well and expect to keep his body dry. Those who would achieve an easy conquest of animal passion must give up all unnecessary things which stimulate it. They must control their palate and cease to read suggestive literature and to enjoy all luxuries. I have not the shadow of a doubt

that they will find *brahmacharya* easy enough after such renunciation.

Some people think that it is not a breach of *brahmacharya* to cast a lascivious look at one's own or another's wife or to touch her in the same manner, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Such behaviour constitutes a direct breach of *brahmacharya* in the grosser sense of the term. Men and women who indulge in it deceive themselves and the world, and growing weaker day by day, make themselves easily susceptible to disease. If they stop short of a full satisfaction of desire, the credit for it is due to circumstances and not to themselves They are bound to fall at the very first opportunity.

In *brahmacharya* as conceived by the Ashram those who are married behave as if they were not married Married people do well to renounce gratification outside the marital bond, theirs is a limited *brahmacharya*. But to look upon them as *brahmacharis* is to do violence to that glorious term.

Such is the complete Ashram definition of *brahmacharya* However there are men as well as women in the Ashram who enjoy considerable freedom in meeting one another The ideal is that one Ashramite should have the same freedom in meeting another as is enjoyed by a son in meeting his mother or by a brother in meeting his sister. That is to say, the restrictions that are generally imposed for the protection of *brahmacharya* are lifted in the Satyagraha Ashram, where we believe that *brahmacharya* which ever stands in need of such adventitious support is no *brahmacharya* at all The restrictions may be necessary at first but must wither away in time. Their disappearance does not mean that a *brahmachari* goes about seeking the company of women, but it does mean that if there is an occasion for him to minister to a woman, he may not refuse such ministry under the impression that it is forbidden to him.

Woman for a *brahmachari* is not the 'doorkeeper of hell' but is an incarnation of our Mother who is in Heaven. He is no *brahmachari* at all whose mind is disturbed if he happens to see a woman or if he has to touch her in order to render service A *brahmachari's* reaction to a living image and to a bronze statue is one and the same. But a man who is perturbed at the very mention of woman and who is desirous of observing *brahmacharya*, must fly even from a figurine made of metal.

An ashram, where men and women thus live and work together, serve one another and try to observe *brahmacharya*, is exposed to many perils. Its arrangements involve to a certain extent

a deliberate imitation of life in the West. I have grave doubts about my competence to undertake such an experiment. But this applies to all my experiments. It is on account of these doubts that I do not look upon anyone else as my disciple Those who have joined the Ashram after due deliberation have joined me as co-workers, fully conscious of all the risks involved therein As for the young boys and girls, I look upon them as my own children, and as such they are automatically drawn within the pale of my experiments These experiments are undertaken in the name of the God of Truth. He is the Master Potter while we are mere clay in His all-powerful hands.

My experience of the Ashram so far has taught me that there is no ground for disappointment as regards the results of this pursuit of *brahmacharya* under difficulties Men as well as women have on the whole derived benefit from it, but the greatest benefit has in my opinion accrued to women. Some of us have fallen, some have risen after sustaining fall. The possibility of stumbling is implicit in all such experimentation. Where there is cent per cent success, it is not an experiment but a characteristic of omniscience.

I now come to a point of vital importance which I have reserved for treatment towards the end of the discussion We are told in the *Bhagavad Gita* (II 59) that "when a man starves his senses, the objects of those senses disappear from him, but not the yearning for them, the yearning too departs when he beholds the Supreme", that is to say, the Truth or Brahman (God). The whole truth of the matter has here been set forth by the experienced Krishna. Fasting and all other forms of discipline are ineffective without the grace of God. What is the vision of the Truth or God? It does not mean seeing something with the physical eye or witnessing a miracle Seeing God means realization of the fact that God abides in one's heart. The yearning must persist until one has attained this realization, and will vanish upon realization. It is with this end in view that we keep observances, and engage ourselves in spiritual endeavour at the Ashram. Realization is the final fruit of constant effort. The human lover sacrifices his all for his beloved, but his sacrifice is fruitless inasmuch as it is offered for the sake of momentary pleasure. But the quest of Truth calls for even greater concentration than that of the human beloved. There is joy ineffable in store for the aspirant at the end of the quest. Still very few of us are as earnest as even the human lover. Such being the facts of the case, what is the use of complaining that the quest of truth is an uphill task?

The human beloved may be at a distance of several thousand miles, God is there in the tabernacle of the human heart, nearer to us than the finger nails are to the fingers But what is to be done with a man who wanders all over the wide world in search of treasure which as a matter of fact is buried under his very feet?

The *brahmacharya* observed by a self-restraining person is not something to be despised. It certainly serves to weaken the force of the yearning for the 'flesh-pots of Egypt'. One may keep fasts or adopt various other methods of mortifying the flesh, but the objects of sense must be compelled to disappear. The yearning will get itself in readiness to go as this process is on. Then the seeker will have the beatific vision, and that will be the signal for the yearning to make its final exit. The treasure supposed to be lost will be recovered. He who has not put all his strength into his effort has no right to complain that he has not 'seen' Brahman. Observing *brahmacharya* is one of the means to the end which is seeing Brahman. Without *brahmacharya* no one may expect to see Him, and without seeing Him one cannot observe *brahmacharya* to perfection. The verse therefore does not rule out self-discipline but only indicates its limitations.

All members of the Ashram, young as well as old, married as well as unmarried, try to observe *brahmacharya*, but only a few will observe it for life. When the young people come to years of discretion, they are told that they are not bound to observe *brahmacharya* any longer against their will, and that whoever feels that he is unable to put forth the requisite effort has a right to marry. And when he makes the request the Ashram helps him in finding out a suitable partner in life. This position is very well understood, and the results have been uniformly good. The young men have persisted in larger numbers. The girls too have done pretty well. None of them married before she was fifteen, and many married only after they were nineteen

Those who wish to marry with Ashram assistance must rest satisfied with the simplest of religious ceremonies. There are no dinners, no guests invited from outside, no beating of drums. Both bride and bridegroom are dressed in hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. There are no ornaments in gold or silver. There is no marriage settlement and no dowry except a few clothes and a spinning-wheel. The function hardly costs even ten rupees, and takes not more than one hour. The bride and bridegroom recite in their own language the *mantras* (Vedic verses) of the *saptapadi*[1]

[1] For the meanings of the *mantras*, *vide* Vol XXX, p. 88.

the purport of which has already been explained to them. On the day fixed for the marriage, the bride and bridegroom keep a fast, water trees, clean the cowshed and the Ashram well and read the *Gita* before the ceremony. Those who give away the bride also fast until they have made the gift. We now insist that the Ashram will not help to arrange a marriage between members of the same subcaste, and everyone is encouraged to seek his mate outside his own subcaste [1]

V

NON-STEALING AND NON-POSSESSION OR POVERTY

These two, along with truth, ahimsa and *brahmacharya* that have gone before, constitute the five *mahavratas* (primary observances) of old and have been included in the Ashram observances as they are necessary for one who seeks self-realization But they do not call for any lengthy discussion.

1. Non-stealing

To take something from another without his permission is theft of course. But it is also theft to use a thing for a purpose different from the one intended by the lender or to use it for a period longer than that which has been fixed with him The profound truth upon which this observance is based is that God never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment. Therefore whoever appropriates more than the minimum that is really necessary for him is guilty of theft.

2. Non-possession or Poverty

This is covered by Non-stealing. We may neither take nor keep a superfluous thing. It is therefore a breach of this observance to possess food or furniture which we do not really need. He who can do without chairs will not keep them in his house. The seeker will deliberately and voluntarily reduce his wants and cultivate progressively simple habits.

Non-stealing and Non-possession are mental states only. No human being can keep these observances to perfection. The body too is a possession, and so long as it is there, it calls for other possessions in its train But the seeker will cultivate the spirit of detachment and give up one possession after another. Everyone cannot be judged by the same standard. An ant may fall from

[1] The translator has added the following footnote "This was written in 1932 In 1948 Gandhiji said a marriage could be celebrated in his presence only if one of the parties was a Harijan and the other a caste Hindu."

grace if it stores two grains instead of one. An elephant on the other hand will have a lot of grass heaped before itself and yet it cannot be charged with having 'great possessions'.

These difficulties appear to have given rise to the current conception of sannyasa (renunciation of the world), which is not accepted by the Ashram. Such sannyasa may be necessary for some rare spirit who has the power of conferring benefits upon the world by only thinking good thoughts in a cave But the world would be ruined if everyone became a cave-dweller. Ordinary men and women can only cultivate mental detachment. Whoever lives in the world and lives in it only for serving it is a sannyasi.

We of the Ashram hope to become sannyasis in this sense We may keep necessary things but should be ready to give up everything including our bodies. The loss of nothing whatever should worry us at all So long as we are alive, we should render such service as we are capable of It is a good thing if we get food to eat and clothes to wear; it is also a good thing if we don't. We should so train our minds that no Ashramite will fail to give a good account of himself when testing time comes.

VI

BREAD LABOUR

The Ashram holds that every man and woman must work in order to live. This principle came home to me upon reading one of Tolstoy's essays. Referring to the Russian writer Bondareff, Tolstoy observes that his discovery of the vital importance of bread labour is one of the most remarkable discoveries of modern times. The idea is that every healthy individual must labour enough for his food, and his intellectual faculties must be exercised not in order to obtain a living or amass a fortune but only in the service of mankind. If this principle is observed everywhere, all men would be equal, none would starve and the world would be saved from many a sin.

It is possible that this golden rule will never be observed by the whole world. Millions observe it in spite of themselves without understanding it. But their mind is working in a contrary direction, so that they are unhappy themselves and their labour is not as fruitful as it should be. This state of things serves as an incentive to those who understand and seek to practise the rule. By rendering a willing obedience to it they enjoy good health as well as perfect peace and develop their capacity for service.

Tolstoy made a deep impression on my mind, and even in South Africa I began to observe the rule to the best of my ability.

And ever since the Ashram was founded, bread labour has been perhaps its most characteristic feature.

In my opinion the same principle has been set forth in the third chapter of the *Gita*. I do not go so far as to say that the word *yajna* (sacrifice) there means body labour. But when the *Gita* says that 'rain comes from sacrifice', (verse 14)[1], I think it indicates the necessity of bodily labour. The 'residue of sacrifice' (verse 13)[2] is the bread that we have won in the sweat of our brow. Labouring enough for one's food has been classed in the *Gita* as a *yajna* Whoever eats more than is enough for sustaining the body is a thief, for most of us hardly perform labour enough to maintain themselves. I believe that a man has no right to receive anything more than his keep, and that everyone who labours is entitled to a living wage

This does not rule out the division of labour The manufacture of everything needed to satisfy essential human wants involves bodily labour, so that labour in all essential occupations counts as bread labour. But as many of us do not perform such labour, they have to take exercise in order to preserve their health A cultivator working on his farm from day to day has not to take breathing exercise or stretch his muscles Indeed if he observes the other laws of health, he will never be afflicted with illness.

God never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment, with the result that if anyone appropriates more than he really needs, he reduces his neighbour to destitution. The starvation of people in several parts of the world is due to many of us seizing very much more than we need. We may utilize the gifts of nature just as we choose, but in her books the debits are always equal to the credits. There is no balance in either column.

This law is not invalidated by the fact that men raise bigger crops by mechanizing agriculture and using artificial fertilizers, and similarly increase the industrial output. This only means a transformation of natural energy. Try as we might, the balance is always nil.

Be that as it may, the observance best kept in the Ashram is that of bread labour, and no wonder. Its fulfilment is easy with ordinary care For certain hours in the day, there is nothing to be done but work. Work is therefore bound to be put in. A worker may be lazy, inefficient or inattentive, but he works for a number of hours all the same Again certain kinds of labour are capable of yielding an immediate product and the worker cannot idle away

[1] & [2] *Vide* Vol XXXII, p 160.

a considerable amount of his time. In an institution where body labour plays a prominent part there are few servants. Drawing water, splitting firewood, cleaning and filling lamps with oil, sanitary service, sweeping the roads and houses, washing one's clothes, cooking,—all these tasks must always be performed.

Besides this there are various activities carried on in the Ashram as a result of and in order to help fulfilment of the observances, such as agriculture, dairying, weaving, carpentry, tanning and the like which must be attended to by many members of the Ashram.

All these activities may be deemed sufficient for keeping the observance of bread labour, but another essential feature of *yajna* (sacrifice) is the idea of serving others, and the Ashram will perhaps be found wanting from this latter standpoint. The Ashram ideal is to live to serve. In such an institution there is no room for idleness or shirking duty, and everything should be done with right goodwill If this were actually the case, the Ashram ministry would be more fruitful than it is. But we are still very far from such a happy condition. Therefore although in a sense every activity in the Ashram is of the nature of *yajna*, it is compulsory for all to spin for at least one hour in the name of God incarnated as the Poor (*Daridranarayana*).

People often say that in an institution like the Ashram where body labour is given pride of place there is no scope for intellectual development, but my experience is just the reverse. Everyone who has been to the Ashram has made intellectual progress as well, I know of none who was the worse on account of a sojourn in the Ashram.

Intellectual development is often supposed to mean a knowledge of facts concerning the universe I freely admit that such knowledge is not laboriously imparted to the students in the Ashram. But if intellectual progress spells understanding and discrimination, there is adequate provision for it in the Ashram. Where body labour is performed for mere wages, it is possible that the labourer becomes dull and listless. No one tells him how and why things are done, he himself has no curiosity and takes no interest in his work But such is not the case in the Ashram Everything including sanitary service must be done intelligently, enthusiastically and for the love of God Thus there is scope for intellectual development in all departments of Ashram activity. Everyone is encouraged to acquire full knowledge of his own subject. Anyone who neglects to do this must answer for it. Everyone in the Ashram is a labourer; none is a wage-slave.

It is a gross superstition to imagine that knowledge is acquired only through books We must discard this error Reading books has a place in life, but is useful only in its own place If book-knowledge is cultivated at the cost of body labour, we must raise a revolt against it Most of our time must be devoted to body labour, and only a little to reading. As in India today the rich and the so-called higher classes despise body labour, it is very necessary to insist on the dignity of labour. Even for real intellectual development one should engage in some useful bodily activity.

It is desirable if at all possible that the Ashram should give the workers some more time for reading. It is also desirable that illiterate Ashramites should have a teacher to help them in their studies. But it appears that time for reading and the like cannot be given at the cost of any of the present activities of the Ashram. Nor can we engage paid teachers, and so long as the Ashram cannot attract more men who are capable of teaching ordinary school subjects, we have to manage with as many such as we have got in our midst. The school and college-educated men who are in the Ashram have not still fully acquired the skill of correlating the three R's with body labour This is a new experiment for all of us. But we shall learn from experience, and those of us who have received ordinary education will by and by find out ways and means of imparting their knowledge to others.

VII

SWADESHI

At the Ashram we hold that swadeshi is a universal law. A man's first duty is to his neighbour This does not imply hatred for the foreigner or partiality for the fellow-countryman. Our capacity for service has obvious limits. We can serve even our neighbour with some difficulty If every one of us duly performed his duty to his neighbour, no one in the world who needed assistance would be left unattended. Therefore one who serves his neighbour serves all the world. As a matter of fact there is in swadeshi no room for distinction between one's own and other people To serve one's neighbour is to serve the world. Indeed it is the only way open to us of serving the world. One to whom the whole world is as his family should have the power of serving the universe without moving from his place. He can exercise this power only through service rendered to his neighbour. Tolstoy goes further and says that at present we are riding on other people's

backs, it is enough only if we get down This is another way of putting the same thing No one can serve others without serving himself And whoever tries to achieve his private ends without serving others harms himself as well as the world at large The reason is obvious. All living beings are members one of another so that a person's every act has a beneficial or harmful influence on the whole world. We cannot see this, near-sighted as we are The influence of a single act of an individual on the world may be negligible. But that influence is there all the same, and an awareness of this truth should make us realize our responsibility

Swadeshi therefore does not involve any disservice to the foreigner Still swadeshi does not reach everywhere, for that is impossible in the very nature of things In trying to serve the world, one does not serve the world and fails to serve even the neighbour. In serving the neighbour one in effect serves the world. Only he who has performed his duty to his neighbour has the right to say, 'All are akin to me' But if a person says, 'All are akin to me', and neglecting his neighbour gives himself up to self-indulgence, he lives to himself alone

We find some good men who leave their own place and move all over the world serving non-neighbours They do nothing wrong, and their activity is not an exception to the law of swadeshi Only their capacity for service is greater To one man, only he who lives next door to him is his neighbour. For a second man his neighbourhood is co-extensive with his village and for a third with ten surrounding villages Thus everyone serves according to his capacity. A common man cannot do uncommon work. Definitions are framed with an eye to him alone, and imply everything which is not contrary to their spirit When he observes the law of swadeshi, the ordinary man does not think that he is doing service to any others He deals with the neighbouring producer, as it is convenient for him But an occasion may arise when this is inconvenient. One who knows that swadeshi is the law of life will observe it even on such occasions. Many of us at present are not satisfied with the quality of goods made in India, and are tempted to buy foreign goods. It is therefore necessary to point out that swadeshi does not simply minister to our convenience but is a rule of life. Swadeshi has nothing to do with hatred of the foreigner It can never be one's duty to wish or to do ill to others.

Khadi has been conceived as the symbol of swadeshi, because India has committed a heinous sin by giving it up and thus failing in the discharge of her natural duty.

The importance of khadi and the spinning-wheel first dawned on me in 1908,[1] when I had no idea of what the wheel was like and did not even know the difference between the wheel and the loom. I had only a vague idea of the condition of India's villages, but still I clearly saw that the chief cause of their pauperization was the destruction of the spinning-wheel, and resolved that I would try to revive it when I returned to India

I returned in 1915 with my mind full of these ideas Swadeshi was one of the observances ever since the Ashram was started But none of us knew how to spin. We therefore rested content with setting up a handloom Some of us still retained a liking for fine cloth. No swadeshi yarn of the requisite fineness for women's saris was available in the market For a very short time therefore they were woven with foreign yarn But we were soon able to obtain fine yarn from Indian mills

It was no easy job even to set up the handloom at the Ashram. None of us had the least idea of weaving We obtained a loom and a weaver through friends Maganlal Gandhi undertook to learn weaving.

I conducted experiments at the Ashram and at the same time carried on swadeshi propaganda in the country. But it was like *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark so long as we could not spin yarn At last however I discovered the spinning-wheel, found out spinners and introduced the wheel in the Ashram The whole story has been unfolded in the *Autobiography*[2]

But that did not mean that our difficulties were at an end. On the other hand they increased, since such of them as were hidden till now became manifest

Touring in the country I saw that people would not take to the spinning-wheel as soon as they were told about it I knew that not much money could be made by spinning, but I had no idea of how little it was. Then again the yarn that was spun would not at once be uniform as well as fine Many could spin only coarse and weak yarn. Not all kinds of cotton were suitable for spinning. The cotton must be carded and made into slivers, and in carding much depended upon the condition of the cotton. Any and every spinning-wheel would not do. To revive the spinning-wheel thus meant the launching of a big scheme Money alone could not do the trick. As for man-power too, hundreds of workers would be needed, and these men should be ready to learn a new

[1] Gandhiji wrote on the subject in *Hind Swaraj*, *vide* Vol X, pp 57-61

[2] *Vide* Vol XXXIX, pp 389-91

art, to be satisfied with a small salary and to live out their lives in villages. But even that was not enough. The rural atmosphere was surcharged with idleness and lack of faith and hope. The wheel could make no headway if this did not improve. Thus a successful revival of the wheel could be brought about only with an army of single-minded men and women equipped with infinite patience and strong faith

At first I was alone in having this faith. Faith indeed was the only capital that I had, but I saw that if there is faith, everything else is added unto it Faith enlightens the intellect and induces habits of industry. It was clear that all experiments should be conducted at and through the Ashram which indeed existed for that very purpose. I realized that spinning should be the principal physical activity of the Ashram Thus only could it be reduced to a science. Therefore spinning was at last recognized as a *mahayajna* (primary sacrifice), and everyone who joined the Ashram had to learn spinning and to spin regularly every day.

But *yajna* implies skill in action (कर्मसु कौशलम्)[1] To spin some yarn somehow cannot be called a *yajna* At first the rule was that the members should spin for at least half an hour every day. But it was soon found that if the spinning-wheel went out of order, one could not spin even a couple of yards in half an hour. Therefore the rule was modified and members were asked to spin at least 160 rounds, one round being equal to 4 feet Again yarn was no good if it was not uniform as well as strong. Tests of strength and uniformity were therefore devised, and we have now made such progress that spinning yarn coarser than 20s does not count as *yajna*.

But granted that good yarn is spun, who would make use of it? I was sure from the first that the person who did spinning as a sacrament must not use his own yarn, but I was unable to carry conviction to others. Where was the harm if the spinner paid the wages and purchased his yarn for himself? I deceived myself and agreed that one who paid the wages and bought his own yarn should be considered a spinning-sacrificer. This error has not still been fully rectified. Errors not dealt with with a strong hand at their first appearance tend to become permanent, and are difficult to eradicate like chronic diseases.

As a consequence of this *yajna*, spinning has made great strides in India, but it has still to take root in each of our villages. The reason is obvious. My faith was not coupled with knowledge Some

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II 50

knowledge was acquired after mistakes had been committed. Co-workers have joined me, but are too few for the great task in hand. There are hundreds of workers, but perhaps they have not in them the requisite faith and knowledge. The root being thus weak, one may not expect to enjoy the ripest fruit.

But for this I cannot find fault with anybody. The work is new and wide as the ocean and it bristles with difficulties. Therefore though the result of our activity is not gratifying, it is still sufficient for sustaining our faith. We have every right to hope for complete success. Faithful workers, men as well as women, have joined in adequate numbers and have accumulated a fund of valuable experience, so that this movement is certainly destined not to perish.

Khadi has given rise to quite a number of other activities at the Ashram as well as elsewhere in the country which cannot here be dealt with at any length. Suffice it to say that cotton crops are raised, spinning-wheels are made, cloth is dyed, and simple hand-operated machines are manufactured for all the processes from ginning to weaving. These machines are being improved from time to time. The progress made in producing a more efficient type of spinning-wheel is a piece of poetry to my mind.

VIII

REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY

The Ashram was founded in order to serve and if necessary to die in the service of Truth If therefore while holding that untouchability is a sinful thing, it did not do something positive in order to end it, it could hardly deserve the name of Satyagraha (adherence to Truth) Ashram. Even in South Africa we recognized untouchability as a sin. When the Ashram therefore was founded in India, removal of untouchability easily became one of its major activities.

Within a month of the foundation of the Ashram, Dudabhai applied for admission along with his family. I had no idea that the testing time of the Ashram would arrive so soon. Dudabhai's application was supported by Shri Amritlal Thakkar I felt bound to admit a family which was recommended by him.

The arrival of Dudabhai was the signal for a storm breaking upon the placid atmosphere of the Ashram [1] Kasturba, Maganlal Gandhi and Mrs. Maganlal had each of them some scruples in living with so-called untouchables. Things came to such a pass that

[1] *Vide* also Vol. XXXIX, pp 315-7

Kasturba should either observe Ashram rules or else leave the Ashram But the argument that a woman in following in her husband's footsteps incurs no sin appealed to her and she quieted down I do not hold that a wife is bound to follow her husband in what she considers sinful. But I welcomed my wife's attitude in the present case, because I looked upon the removal of untouchability as a meritorious thing No one could uphold untouchability and still live in the Ashram It would have been extremely painful to me if my wife had had to leave the Ashram, seeing that she had been my companion all these days at the cost of great suffering It was hard to be separated from her, but one must put up with every hardship that comes his way in the discharge of his duty. I had therefore no hesitation in accepting my wife's renunciation of untouchability not as an independent person but only as a faithful wife.

Maganlal Gandhi's case was harder than mine He packed up his things and came to me to bid good-bye But who was I to bid him good-bye? I put him on his guard. I told him that the Ashram was his creation as much as mine, and would be destroyed if he left it. But he certainly did not want that it should perish He did not need to seek my permission to leave an institution which he himself had brought into existence But to leave the Ashram should be something unthinkable for him This appeal did not fall on deaf ears. Perhaps Maganlal had thought of leaving in order to give me a free hand. I could endure to be separated from all the world besides but not from Maganlal. I therefore suggested that he should go to Madras with family He and his wife would learn more of weaving there and would have more time to ponder over the situation that had developed. So they went and lived in Madras for six months. They mastered the art of weaving and after mature consideration also washed their hearts clean of untouchability.[1]

The internal storm thus blew over. But there was a storm outside the Ashram too. The chief person who financed the Ashram discontinued his assistance. There was even a possibility that the Ashramites ould not be allowed any more to draw water from the neighbour's well. But all difficulties were surmounted by and by. As regards finance, something happened which was not unlike Narasinha Mehta's *hundi* (bill of exchange) being

[1] The translator has condensed the story here Gandhiji records that Maganlal and his family returned to the Ashram along with Manilal who had gone to Madras to learn hand-weaving.

honoured at Dvaravati. A sum of thirteen thousand rupees was received from an unexpected source. Thus the Ashram ordeal in keeping Dudabhai at any cost was not so severe as it might well have been. The Ashram passed the test as regards its opposition to untouchability. 'Untouchable' families come to the Ashram freely and live in it. Dudabhai's daughter Lakshmi has become a full member of the family.

Three callings followed by the so-called untouchables are practised in the Ashram, and improved methods are devised in each. Everyone in the Ashram has in turn to do sanitary service, which is looked upon not as a special calling but a universal duty. No outside labour is engaged for this work, which is carried on on lines suggested by Dr. Poore. Night-soil is buried in shallow trenches and is thus converted into manure in only a few days. Dr. Poore says that the soil is living up to a depth of twelve inches. Millions of bacteria are there to clean up dirt. Sunlight and air penetrate the ground to that depth. Therefore night-soil buried in the upper layer readily combines with the earth.

Closets are so constructed that they are free from smell and there is no difficulty in cleaning them Everyone who visits them covers the night-soil with plenty of dry earth, so that the top is always dry.

Then again we have handloom weaving Coarse khadi was manufactured in Gujarat by Harijan weavers only. The industry was almost on the verge of destruction, and many weavers were compelled to take up scavenging for a living. But now there has been a revival of this handicraft.

Thirdly we have tanning. We shall deal with it in the chapter on the Ashram dairy.

The Ashram does not believe in subcastes. There are no restrictions on interdining and all Ashramites sit to dinner in the same line But no propaganda in favour of interdining is carried on outside the Ashram, as it is unnecessary for the removal of untouchability, which implies the lifting of bans imposed on Harijans in public institutions and discarding the superstition that a man is polluted by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth in a particular caste. This disability can also be removed by legislation. Interdining and intermarriage are reforms of a different type which cannot be promoted by legislation or social pressure. The Ashramites therefore feel themselves free to take permitted food with everyone else but do not carry on any such propaganda.

Schools are established and wells sunk for Harijans through the Ashram which chiefly finds the finance for such activities. The real anti-untouchability work carried on in the Ashram is the reformed conduct of the Ashramites. There is no room in the Ashram for any ideas of high and low.

However the Ashram believes that varnas[1] and ashramas[2] are essential elements of Hinduism Only it puts a different interpretation on these time-honoured terms. Four varnas and four ashramas are an arrangement not peculiar to Hinduism but capable of world-wide application, and a universal rule, the breach of which has involved humanity in numerous disasters. The four ashramas are *brahmacharya*, *garhasthya*, *vanaprasthya* and sannyasa. *Brahmacharya* is the stage during which men as well as women prosecute their studies, and should not only observe *brahmacharya* but should also be free from any other burden except that of studies. This lasts till at least the twenty-fifth year, when the student becomes a householder if he wishes. Almost all the students thus become householders But this stage should close at the age of fifty. During that period the householder enjoys the pleasures of life, makes money, practises a profession and rears a family From fifty to seventy-five wife and husband should live apart and wholly devote themselves to the service of the people. They must leave their families and try to look upon the world as a big family. During the last 25 years they should become sannyasis, live apart, set to the people an example of ideal religious life and maintain themselves with whatever the people choose to give them. It is clear that society as a whole would be elevated if many carried out this scheme in their lives.

So far as I am aware, the ashrama arrangement is unknown outside India, but even in India it has practically disappeared at present There is no such thing now as *brahmacharya*, which is intended to be the foundation of life For the rest we have sannyasis, most of them such only in name, with nothing of sannyasa about them except the orange robe. Many of them are ignorant, and some who have acquired learning are not knowers of Brahman but fanatics There are some honourable exceptions but even these well-conducted monks lack the lustre we love to associate with sannyasa. It is possible that some real sannyasis lead a solitary life. But it is obvious that sannyasa as a stage in life has fallen into desuetude. A society which is served by able san-

[1] The four castes
[2] The four stages of life

nyasis would not be poor in spirit, unprovided even with the necessaries of life, and politically dependent, as Hindu society is at present. If sannyasa were with us a living thing, it would exert a powerful influence on neighbouring faiths, for the sannyasi is a servant not only of Hinduism but of all the faiths of mankind.

But we can never hope to see such sannyasis unless *brahmacharya* is observed in the country. As for *vanaprasthya*, there is no trace of it. The last stage we have to consider is that of the householder. But our householders are given to unregulated self-indulgence. Householders in the absence of the three other ashramas live like brutes. Self-restraint is the one thing which differentiates man from beast, but it is practised no longer.

The Ashram is engaged in the great endeavour to resuscitate the four ashramas. It is like an ant trying to lift a bag of sugar. This effort though apparently ridiculous is part of the Ashram quest of truth. All the inmates of the Ashram therefore observe *brahmacharya*. Permanent members must observe it for life. All the inmates are not members in this sense. Only a few are members, the rest are students. If this effort is crowned with success, we may hope to see a revival of the ashrama scheme of life. The sixteen years during which the Ashram has functioned are not a sufficiently long period for the assessment of results I have no idea of the time when such assessment will be possible. I can only say that there is nothing like dissatisfaction with the progress achieved up to date.

If the ashrama scheme has broken down, the plight of the varnas is equally bad. At first there were four varnas (classes); but now there are innumerable sections or only one. If we take it that there are as many varnas as there are castes and subcastes, their name is Legion; on the other hand if, as I think, varnas have nothing to do with caste, there is only a single varna left and that is the Shudra. We are here not finding fault with anybody but only stating the facts of the case. Shudras are those who serve and are dependent upon others. India is a dependency; therefore every Indian is a Shudra. The cultivator does not own his land, the merchant his merchandise. There is hardly a Kshatriya or a Brahmin who possesses the virtues which the Shastras attribute to his varna.

My impression is that there was no idea of high and low when the varna system was discovered No one is high and no one is low in this world; therefore he who thinks he belongs to a high class is never high-class, and he who believes himself to be low is merely the victim of ignorance. He has been taught by his masters

that he is low. If a Brahmin has knowledge, those who are without it will respect him as a matter of course. But if he is puffed up by the respect thus shown to him and imagines himself to belong to a high class, he directly ceases to be a Brahmin. Virtue will always command respect, but when the man of virtue thinks much of himself, his virtue ceases to have any significance for the world. Talents of all kinds are a trust and must be utilized for the benefit of society. The individual has no right to live unto himself. Indeed it is impossible to live unto oneself. We fully live unto ourselves when we live unto society.

No matter what was the position in ancient times, no one can nowadays go through life claiming to belong to a high class. Society will not willingly admit any such claim to superiority, but only under duress. The world is now wide awake. This awakening has perhaps given rise to some licence, but even so public opinion is not now prepared to accept any distinctions of high and low, which are being attacked on all sides. There is ever increasing realization that all are equal as human souls. The fact that we are all the creatures of one God rules out all ideas of high and low. When we say that no one is high-born or low-born, it does not mean that all have or ought to have equal talents. All have not equal talents, equal property or equal opportunities. Still all are equal like brothers and sisters of different dispositions, abilities and ages.

If therefore the varna system is a spiritual arrangement, there cannot be any place in it for high and low.

Thus there are four varnas, all equal in status, and they are determined by birth. They can be changed by a person choosing another profession, but if varnas are not as a rule determined by birth, they tend to lose all meaning.

The varna system is ethical as well as economic. It recognizes the influence of previous lives and of heredity. All are not born with equal powers and similar tendencies. Neither the parents nor the State can measure the intelligence of each child. But there would be no difficulty if each child is prepared for the profession indicated by heredity, environment and the influence of former lives; no time would be lost in fruitless experimentation, there would be no soul-killing competition, a spirit of contentment would pervade society and there would be no struggle for existence.

The varna system implies the obliteration of all distinctions of high and low. If the carpenter is held to be superior to the shoemaker and the pleader or doctor is superior to both of them,

no one would willingly become a shoemaker or carpenter and all would try to become pleaders or doctors. They would be entitled to do so and to be praised for doing so. That is to say, the varna system would be looked upon as an evil and abolished as such.

But when it is suggested that everyone should practise his father's profession, the suggestion is coupled with the condition that the practitioner of every profession will earn only a living wage and no more. If the carpenter earns more than a shoemaker and the pleader or doctor more than both, everyone would become a lawyer or doctor. Such is the case at present, with the result that hatred has increased and there are more lawyers and doctors than are necessary. It may be that society needs the lawyer or doctor even as it needs the shoemaker and the carpenter. These four professions are here taken only as illustrations and for comparison. It would be irrelevant to stop to consider whether society has particular need or no need at all for this, that or the other profession.

This principle then is an integral part of the varna system, that learning is not a trade and may not be used in order to amass riches. Therefore in so far as his ministrations may be necessary, the lawyer or doctor ought by practising his profession to earn only a living wage. And such was actually the case formerly. The village vaidya (physician) did not earn more than the carpenter but only a living wage. In short the emoluments of all crafts and professions should be equal and amount to a living wage. The number of varnas has no sanctity about it; their value is due to the fact that they define the duties of man. Varnas may be supposed to be one or more just as we like. The scriptures enumerate four of them. But when once we have assigned equal status to all, it makes little difference whether we think that there are four of them or that there is only one

Such is the varna system which the Ashram is trying to resuscitate. It is like Dame Partington with her mop, trying to push back the Atlantic Ocean I have already mentioned its two fundamental principles, namely, that there are no high and low, and everyone is entitled to a living wage, the living wage being the same for all. In so far as these principles win acceptance, they will render a positive service to society.

It may be objected that if such a plan is accepted there will be no incentive for the acquisition of knowledge. But the object with which knowledge is acquired nowadays tends to corrupt it, and therefore the absence of an incentive will be entirely beneficial. Knowledge truly so called is intended for one's salvation, that is

to say, service of mankind. Whoever has a desire to render service will certainly try to equip himself with the requisite knowledge, and his knowledge will be an ornament to himself as well as to society. Again when the temptation to amass riches is removed, there will be a change for the better in the curriculum of studies as well as in the methods of education. There is much misuse of knowledge at present. This misuse will be reduced to the minimum in the 'new order'.

Even then there will be scope for competition in trying to be good and helpful. And there will be no discontent or disorder as all will receive a living wage.

Varna is wrongly understood today. That wrong understanding must make way for the principles outlined above. Untouchability must go, and varnas should have nothing to do with interdining or intermarriage. A person will dine with and marry whom he likes. But as a rule he will marry someone who belongs to the same varna as himself. But if he marries a person belonging to another varna, his act will not count as a sin. A person will be boycotted not by the varna but by society at large when his conduct justifies such a measure. Society will be better constituted than it is at present, and the impurity and hypocrisy which infest it now will be dislodged.

IX

AGRICULTURE

This department of Ashram activities owes its existence to Maganlal Gandhi. But for him I would not have had the courage to take up agriculture at all, although an ashram without it would be something like *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark. For we had not the requisite skill and environment for it as I thought. Agriculture is a very big undertaking and would call for a lot of land, money and man-power. I was afraid that it would distract our attention from other necessary things which could be done and would not wait. But Maganlal was insistent and I yielded to him. 'Let me do it,' he said, 'if only for my own diversion.' Maganlal hardly ever argued with me. He thought it his duty to carry out my ideas If he did not understand them or if he disagreed, he would tell me so. If even then I stuck to my plans, he would take it that they were correct, and execute them. In fact he believed that an ashram without agriculture was something not to be thought of, and he would have had to make out a case for his belief. Instead he put forward the supreme argument of love and the Ashram launched upon agri-

culture. Most of the trees in the Ashram were planted by Maganlal or at his instance.

I still have my doubts about agriculture. Even today I cannot claim that it is a full-fledged Ashram activity But I am not sorry for what little cultivation of the soil is done in the Ashram A considerable amount of money has been sunk in it. It is not possible to show that it is self-supporting. However I am inclined to think that this much farming was necessary for the Ashram. No farming, no Ashram, for it must grow its own vegetables and fruit as far as possible. Indeed later on Maganlal took a vow that he would restrict himself to the use of Ashram-grown vegetables An ashram should acquire the capacity to grow its own food grains and grass for the cattle It may not carry on agricultural research, but an ashram without its farm would look like a face without the nose.

The Ashram farm is only in an experimental stage. It has not much to teach anybody. It is intended to impart only an elementary knowledge of agriculture. At first there was not a single tree in the Ashram, but now there are many trees, planted with a view to their utility. Vegetables are grown as well as some fruit and fodder. Night-soil is used as manure with satisfactory results

Ancient ploughs are used as well as modern improved models, water is pumped from wells by methods which can be followed in villages We are rather partial to ancient implements which are suitable for the poor farmer. They may be susceptible of some slight improvement, but nothing definite can be said about it, as the Ashram has not the time to apply its mind to the subject.

X

DAIRY

The Ashram ideal is to do without milk, as it holds that the milk of animals like meat is no food for mankind. For a year and more no milk or ghee was used in the Ashram, but as the health of the children as well as the adults suffered under this regimen, first ghee and then milk had to be added to the Ashram dietary. And when this was done, it was clear that we must keep cattle in the Ashram.

The Ashram believes in *goraksha* (cow-protection) as a religious duty. But the word *goraksha* savours of pride. Man is incompetent to 'protect' animals, being himself in need of protection from God who is the Protector of all life. The word *goraksha*

was therefore replaced by *goseva* (cow-service). But as the experiment of doing without milk or ghee and thus serving the cow without any selfish considerations did not succeed, cattle were kept in the Ashram. We had buffaloes as well as cows and bullocks at first, as we had not yet realized that it was our duty to keep cows and bullocks only to the exclusion of the buffalo

But it became clear day by day that cow-service alone at present stood for the service of all sub-human life. It is the first step beyond which we have not the resources to go for the time being. Again cow-slaughter is very often the cause of Hindu-Muslim tension. The Ashram believes that it is not the duty of a Hindu, nor has he the right to take away a Muslim's cow by force. There is no service to or protection of the cow in trying to save her by force; on the other hand it only expedites slaughter. Hindus can save the cow and her progeny only by doing their duty to her and thus making her slaughter a costly act which no one can afford to do. Hindu society does not discharge this duty at present. The cow suffers from neglect The buffalo gives more and richer milk than the cow, and keeping a buffalo costs less than keeping a cow. Again if the buffalo brings forth a bull calf, people do not care what becomes of him because buffalo 'protection' or 'service' is not a religious duty for them Hindu society has thus been short-sighted, cowardly, ignorant and selfish enough to neglect the cow and has installed the buffalo in her place, injuring both of them in the process. The buffalo's interest is not served by our keeping her, but lies in her freedom. To keep the buffalo means torturing its bull calf to death. This is not the case in all the provinces, but where the buffalo bull is useless for agricultural purposes as in Gujarat for instance, it is doomed to a premature death.

On account of these considerations, buffaloes were disposed of and the Ashram now insists on keeping cows and bullocks only. Improvement of breed, increasing the quantity and enriching the quality of milk by giving various feeds, the art of preserving milk and extracting butter from it more easily, least painful methods of castrating bull calves,—all these things are attended to. It is in an experimental stage, but the Ashram does believe that the cow will pay for its keep if she is well treated and all her products are fully utilized.

Many perhaps are not aware that a man cannot simply afford to keep a cow, and slaughter is inevitable so long as that is the case. Mankind is not so benevolent that it will die to save the cow or allow it to live on itself as a parasite. The cattle popula-

tion at present is so large that if it is well fed, the human population will not have enough food left for itself. We must therefore prove the proposition that the cow if well kept is capable of greater production.

If this proposition is to be proved, Hindu society must discard some superstitions masquerading as religion. Hindus do not utilize the bones, etc., of dead cows; they do not care what becomes of cattle when they are dead. Instead of looking upon the occupation of a tanner as sacred, they think it unclean. Emaciated cattle are exported to and slaughtered in Australia where their bones are converted into manure, their flesh into meat extract and their hides into boots and shoes. The meat extract, the manure and the shoes are then re-exported to India and used without any compunction.

This stupidity makes for the destruction of the cow, and puts the country to huge economic losses. This is not religion but the very negation of it Tanning has therefore been introduced in the Ashram. None of us is still a skilled tanner. No tanner from outside who would keep the Ashram rules has been available. But all the same tanning is an integral part of Ashram industry and we have every hope that it will be developed and propagated like spinning. The cow will cease to be a burden to the country only if dead cattle are fully utilized. Even then there will not be any profits. Religion is never opposed to economics, but it is always ranged in opposition to profits. If the cow is to pay for its keep, dead cattle should not be allowed to go to waste or to swell the profits of large-scale tanneries. This cannot be done by force. But Hindu society should keep the cow, treat her and her progeny well so long as they are alive, cherish them in their old age, and fully utilize their carcases when they are dead. Thus alone can the cow be saved, and in saving her we shall perhaps learn how to save the rest of the sub-human creation. Thanks to our ignorance, laziness and hatred, the cow today is hastening to her destruction. As for the other cattle, the less said about them the better.

The Ashram suggests that all goshalas and pinjrapoles should be organized religiously and scientifically. The rich should have their own goshalas and insist on using cow's milk and ghee only. Trading in cow's milk should be looked upon as a sin, and the well-to-do should manage public goshalas so as to make both ends meet. The cow would then soon be saved.

The Ashram at present has a limited object in view: to conduct a model goshala at the Ashram, to breed good cows and

bullocks, to utilize their carcases fully when they are dead so as to show that cow-keeping is an economic proposition, to train workers and provide for their employment upon the completion of their training. This work is going on at present. There are many difficulties, but we are fully confident of success.

XI

EDUCATION

This word is here used in a special as well as the current sense. The Ashram experiment in education was a trial for us as nothing else was.

We saw at once that the women and children in the Ashram should be taught to read and write, and a little later on that there should be similar facilities for even the illiterate men that came to the Ashram. Those who had already joined the Ashram could not undertake to teach. If capable teachers were to be attracted to the Ashram, the rule of *brahmacharya* had to be relaxed in their case. The Ashram was therefore divided into two sections, the teachers' quarters and the Ashram proper.

Human beings cannot overcome their weakness all at once. As soon as the two sections came into being, a feeling of superiority and inferiority poisoned the Ashram atmosphere in spite of all our efforts to scotch it. The Ashramites developed spiritual pride, which the teachers could not tolerate. This pride was an obstacle in the attainment of the Ashram ideal and therefore an aspect of untruth as well. If *brahmacharya* was to be observed in its perfection, the division was inevitable. But the *brahmacharis* had no reason to think too highly of themselves. It may be that the *brahmacharis* who sinned mentally in spite of themselves were retrogressing while those who did not claim to be *brahmacharis* but liked *brahmacharya* were making progress. This was clear to the intellect but it was not easy for all of us to put it into practice.

Then again there were differences of opinion as regards the method of education which gave rise to difficulties in administration. There were bitter discussions, but at last all calmed down and learned the lesson of forbearance. This was in my view a triumph of truth, the goal of all Ashram endeavour. Those who held divergent views harboured no evil intentions in their minds, and were indeed grieved at the divergence They wished to practise truth as they saw it. Their partiality for their own standpoint came in the way of their giving due weight to the arguments of their opponents, Hence the quarrels which put our charity to a severe test.

I have my own perhaps peculiar views on education which have not been accepted by my colleagues in full, and here they are:

1. Young boys and girls should have co-education till they are eight years of age.
2. Their education should mainly consist in manual training under the supervision of an educationist.
3. The special aptitudes of each child should be recognized in determining the kind of work he or she should do.
4. The reasons for every process should be explained when the process is being carried on.
5. General knowledge should be imparted to each child as he begins to understand things. Learning to read or write should come later.
6. The child should first be taught to draw simple geometrical figures, and when he has learnt to draw these with ease, he should be taught to write the alphabet. If this is done he will write a good hand from the very first.
7. Reading should come before writing. The letters should be treated as pictures to be recognized and later on to be copied.
8. A child taught on these lines will have acquired considerable knowledge according to his capacity by the time he is eight.
9. Nothing should be taught to a child by force.
10. He should be interested in everything taught to him.
11. Education should appear to the child like play. Play is an essential part of education.
12. All education should be imparted through the mother tongue.
13. The child should be taught Hindi-Urdu as the national language, before he learns letters.
14. Religious education is indispensable and the child should get it by watching the teacher's conduct and by hearing him talk about it.
15. Nine to sixteen constitutes the second stage in the child's education.
16. It is desirable that boys and girls should have co-education during the second stage also as far as possible.
17. Hindu children should now be taught Sanskrit, and Muslim children Arabic.
18. Manual training should be continued during the second stage. Literary education should be allotted more time according to necessity.

19. The boys during this stage should be taught their parents' vocation in such a way that they will by their own choice obtain their livelihood by practising the hereditary craft. This does not apply to the girls.

20 During this stage the child should acquire a general knowledge of world history and geography, botany, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and algebra.

21. Each child should now be taught to sew and to cook.

22. Sixteen to twenty-five is the third stage, during which every young person should have an education according to his or her wishes and circumstances.

23 During the second stage (9-16) education should be self-supporting; that is, the child, all the time that he is learning, is working upon some industry, the proceeds of which will meet the expenditure of the school.

24 Production starts from the very beginning, but during the first stage it does not still catch up with the expenditure.

25. Teachers should be paid not very high salaries but only a living wage. They should be inspired by a spirit of service It is a despicable thing to take any Tom, Dick or Harry as a teacher in the primary stage. All teachers should be men of character.

26 Big and expensive buildings are not necessary for educational institutions.

27. English should be taught only as one of several languages As Hindi is the national language, English is to be used in dealing with other nations and international commerce.

As for women's education I am not sure whether it should be different from men's and when it should begin. But I am strongly of opinion that women should have the same facilities as men and even special facilities where necessary.

There should be night schools for illiterate adults. But I do not think that they must be taught the three R's; they must be helped to acquire general knowledge through lectures, etc., and if they wish, we should arrange to teach them the three R's also.

Experiments in the Ashram have convinced us of one thing, viz., that industry in general and spinning in particular should have pride of place in education, which must be largely self-supporting as well as related to and tending to the betterment of rural life.

In these experiments we have achieved the largest measure of success with the women, who have imbibed the spirit of freedom and self-confidence as no other class of women have done to my knowledge. This success is due to the Ashram atmosphere.

Women in the Ashram are not subject to any restraint which is not imposed on the men as well. They are placed on a footing of absolute equality with the men in all activities. Not a single Ashram task is assigned to the women to the exclusion of the men. Cooking is attended to by both. Women are of course exempted from work which is beyond their strength; otherwise men and women work together everywhere There is no such thing as *purdah* or *laj*[1] in the Ashram. No matter from where she has come, a woman, as soon as she enters the Ashram, breathes the air of freedom and casts out all fear from her mind And I believe that the Ashram observance of *brahmacharya* has made a big contribution to this state of things. Adult girls live in the Ashram as virgins. We are aware that this experiment is fraught with risk but we feel that no awakening among women is possible without incurring it.

Women cannot make any progress so long as there are child marriages. All girls are supposed to be in duty bound to marry and that too before menstruation commences, and widow re-marriage is not permitted. Women, therefore, when they join the Ashram, are told that these social customs are wrong and irreligious But they are not shocked as they find the Ashram practising what it preaches

Not much of what is usually called education will be observed in the Ashram Still we find that the old as well as the young, women as well as men are eager to acquire knowledge and complain that they have no time for it. This is a good sign Many who join the Ashram are not educated or even interested in education. Some of them can hardly read or write. They had no desire for progress so long as they had not joined the Ashram. But when they have lived in the Ashram for a little while, they conceive a a desire for increasing their knowledge. This is a great thing, as to create a desire for knowledge is very often the first step to be taken. But I do not regret it very much that there are insufficient facilities in the Ashram calculated to satisfy this desire The observances kept in the Ashram will perhaps prevent a sufficient number of qualified teachers from joining it. We must therefore rest satisfied with such Ashramites as can be trained to teach. The numerous activities of the Ashram may come in the way of their acquiring the requisite qualifications at all or at an early date. But it does not matter much, as the desire for knowledge can be satisfied later as well as sooner, being independent of a time-limit.

[1] Veil

Real education begins after a child has left school One who has appreciated the value of studies is a student all his life His knowledge must increase from day to day while he is discharging his duty in a conscientious manner. And this is well understood in the Ashram.

The superstition that no education is possible without a teacher is an obstacle in the path of educational progress. A man's real teacher is himself. And nowadays there are numerous aids available for self-education. A diligent person can easily acquire knowledge about many things by himself and obtain the assistance of a teacher when it is needed. Experience is the biggest of all schools. Quite a number of crafts cannot be learnt at school but only in the workshop. Knowledge of these acquired at school is often only parrot-like. Other subjects can be learnt with the help of books. Therefore what adults need is not so much a school as a thirst for knowledge, diligence and self-confidence.

The education of children is primarily a duty to be discharged by the parents. Therefore the creation of a vital educational atmosphere is more important than the foundation of numerous schools. When once this atmosphere has been established on a firm footing the schools will come in due course.

This is the Ashram ideal of education which has been realized to some extent, as every department of Ashram activity is a veritable school.

XII

SATYAGRAHA

The various activities of the Ashram have already been covered more or less. The Ashram came into existence to seek the Truth by adhering to truthful conduct. And while doing so, if we are required to use the weapon of satyagraha, the Ashram may experiment with it, may explore its rules and limitations. The broad framework of these rules has also been discussed.

But what are the limits of satyagraha? When can this weapon be employed with vigour? Man's adherence to truth is also satyagraha. It is not this form of satyagraha that is being discussed here. I am examining its utility as a weapon against an opponent.

Such satyagraha can be offered against associates, relatives, society, the State and the world. At the root of it . . .[1]

Ashram Observances in Action, also from the Gujarati in *Satyagrahashramno Itihas*

[1] This section ends here abruptly

207. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

July 12, 1932

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

It is enough that you apologized to Lakshmidevi; there is no need to fuss over it. You can come over whenever you get leave. The renunciation that we value is mental; it is not going into the forest. Without it nothing is complete. At present there is no question of going to Wardha. It may be considered after Vinoba is released. 'Never say die even if it costs your life.'

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati C.W 350. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P Pandya

208. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

July 13, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE,

You will please excuse me for worrying you again over my troubles. Major Bhandari told me yesterday that, in answer to my letter of the 9th instant, he was to inform me that there was no delay either in your office or Major Bhandari's in attending to my correspondence as soon as it was received from the Government. This I knew. My inquiry was exactly about the Government's procedure. I have been permitted to write letters to friends outside and fellow-prisoners, including those at Yeravda whether male or female. I have written to the latter as regularly as to my people at the Ashram. There is no use my writing to the fellow-prisoners in this Jail if my letters and theirs are not exchanged quickly. The letters naturally relate to mutual welfare and the welfare of those in whom they and I are interested.

The same thing applies to the Ashram letters.

Some of the letters I receive from others are from my standpoint important Whether they are regarded by the authorities as important or otherwise, I should not like to lose them.

My experience of past imprisonment is that when the correspondence goes to the Government, it takes time to receive atten-

tion. In 1930, in the commencement my letters were sent to the Government and I know that they took nearly six weeks before I could get the first batch given to me and this after repeated requests. Subsequently Major Martin, the then Superintendent, was empowered to deal with the correspondence and naturally there was no delay. Of course I can have nothing to say as to who examines my correspondence. What I am concerned about is:

(1) What are exactly the revised instructions about my correspondence?

(2) How long shall I have to wait before I receive my letters and before what I write is posted?

(3) Shall I continue to receive back those letters which may be rejected, and as before be given the reasons for rejection?

(4) Will the letters and parcels withheld from me be treated as my property and cared for and delivered to me whenever I may be discharged?

I shall thank you to forward this letter to the Government and procure for me an early reply.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40), Pt I, p 257

209. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

July 14, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter of 7th instant came to hand this morning, (14th). Just now things are all upside down so far as my correspondence is concerned. All of it goes to the Government. What happens then I do not know. I am inquiring. Such is prison life. It is a good discipline in patience.

I am glad my letters gave some consolation to Damodardas and his wife. I hope they are now out of the wood. What kind of a woman is Prem Kunver? Is she brave enough to face these tremendous losses?

I am keeping quite well. The weight now stands at 105½. The pain in the elbow is at a standstill. It is just possible that the ointment they are now trying may cure the elbow. But whether it does or not, there is nothing to worry over.

Yes, Pyarelal is sure to profit by a temporary abstention from salt. Your experiment, if it continues to yield good results, will be taken up by many. Pyarelal will surely try it. But nothing definite can be said about it until you have gone on with it for at least a year.

The papers say you are on the move. Strange you should have received the order when the police must have known you were about to leave Bombay.[1] They must have received orders before your projected departure could have come to their notice.

Vallabhbhai has now added Sanskrit studies and spinning to the envelope-making. He is most diligent in his Sanskrit studies and although new to the Gandiva wheel, is easily drawing 180 rounds of 20 counts.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6231. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9697

210. LETTER TO M. A. KHAN[2]

July 14, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your admonition. You do not expect me to argue with you. I fear that as a prisoner, I would not be permitted to enter into argument over political matters. But I can[3]

[1] In *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, Mirabehn explains: "Just as I was packing up to go and see Rajendrababu at Chapra, I received a notice ordering me to leave Bombay. I did not change my plans, but went on the day already fixed for my departure."

[2] The addressee had written: "You do not understand politics. Leave it to the Aga Khan and persons like Sastri and Mr. Sapru. You should retire to the Himalayas and admit your mistake." Gandhiji had written to him in his own hand. Mahadev Desai has reported the following conversation about this letter between Sardar Patel and Gandhiji:

SARDAR: Why did you write a reply to this abusive letter in your hand?

BAPU: To a person like him I must write in my own hand.

SARDAR: Because he has abused you? This is what makes many people think too highly of themselves.

BAPU: I do not think this has done us any harm. (*Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, pp. 289-90)

[3] *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, has "may".

tell you that deep thinking in the solitude of a jail has not induced a change in my outlook.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

MOULVI SAHEB M. A. KHAN
KOTWAL STREET BAZAAR 3
FEROZEPUR CANTT.

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 185

211. LETTER TO A. VELUSAMI

July 14, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 7th instant. I never got yours of 12th March last.

There can be no manner of doubt that this universe of sentient beings is governed by a Law. If you can think of a law without its giver, I would say that the Law is the Law-Giver, i.e., God. When we pray to the Law, we simply yearn after knowing the Law and obeying it we become what we yearn after. Hence the necessity for prayers. Though our present life is governed by our past, our future must by that very law of cause and effect be affected by what we do now. To the extent therefore that we feel the choice between two or more courses, we must make that choice.

Why evil exists and what it is are questions which appear to be beyond our limited reason. It should be enough to know that both good and evil exist. And as often as we can distinguish between good and evil, we must choose the one and shun the other.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

VELUSAMI
SIVAGANGA

From a photostat G N. 7947 Also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 183

212. LETTER TO SUDHIR KUMAR SEN GUPTA[1]

July 14, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I took up goat's milk because I had vowed not to take buffalo's or cow's milk. Physiologically there is little difference between the three. It would have been better from the ethical standpoint if I could have resisted the temptation to take goat's milk. But the will to live was greater than the will to obey the ethical code. My views on the ethics of milk food remain unchanged. But I see that there is no effective vegetable substitute for milk. You should not give it up.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. SUDHIR KUMAR SEN GUPTA
C/O BABU RAJANIKANTA SEN GUPTA
PLEADER
HOOGHLY P.O.
BENGAL

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 185 Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I, p 291

213. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJEE

July 16, 1932

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I got your letter. I had asked you to write to me anything about yourself if you wished to do so. If I can share from here your joys and sorrows, I should like to do so. I cannot write anything regarding the Conference. Respectful greetings from

[1] The addressee, a Bengali boy, had written "You had taken the vow to give up milk. But after that you took goat's milk. Did you see any special advantage in it? I am a rice-eater From what thing other than milk can I derive nourishment?"

us all to Grandmother. Does anyone stay with Gokibehn? I wrote to her some days ago[1] My blessings to Sumati[2].

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C W. 4797 Courtesy Shantikumar Morarjee

214. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

July 16, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got today, Saturday, your mail which ordinarily I should have got on Tuesday. We should regard it as God's grace that I got it at all. But we should understand that things have become uncertain now. You will probably have received my letters by now. All of you are having experience of the practice of non-attachment, and so are we here. What could a prisoner do if he was not permitted to write or receive any letters or see visitors? If, then, he is granted some little freedom, why should he expect too much because of that? If, therefore, you stop getting my letters, you should conclude that something must have happened. I will of course go on writing regularly about something or other.

It was a very good thing that the inmate of the Raniparaj Ashram was cremated. If you have come to know his age, let me know, and also if you know of what he died.

Narmada's[3] story reads like an incident in a novel. From here I cannot guide either you or her. If necessary, you may consult Bhai Mavalankar[4] about the matter or, if he cannot get any time or if he is not there, consult Bhai Tulsidas or Fulshankar, the lawyer. In the last analysis this is a question of what is right from the point of view of dharma. You may, therefore, do what you think dharma requires. You have done perfectly right in writing to her husband.

If Chhotubhai[5] stays for the present in the Ashram to look after his aged father, we may perhaps welcome the latter. How-

[1] *Vide* p. 170.
[2] Addressee's wife
[3] Narmadabehn Rana, she was ill-treated by her in-laws and was rescued by Shambhushankar Trivedi of Saurashtra who brought her to the Ashram
[4] Ganesh Vasudev Mavalankar
[5] Khadi student at the Ashram

ever, we cannot let it become a practice for inmates of the Ashram who have invalid relations to bring them to the Ashram. If we do that, the Ashram would be disrupted. This is a difficult time and Chhotubhai's father has already arrived, and so I have suggested a *via media*. If Chhotubhai does not stay in the Ashram, the Ashram should certainly not accept the responsibility of looking after his father.

If, through some unavoidable reason, Hariyomal's[1] son cannot come to the Ashram, I do not think it would be too big a sum to send fifteen rupees every month for him. We have given such help on several occasions. The rule, of course, is what you say it is. But we should think whether it should be applied in Hariyomal's case. Since you know more facts about this matter than I, you may attach what weight you think my opinion deserves and do only what seems right to you.

For Anandi and Mani, follow Dr. Kanuga's[2] advice. I cannot say that taking milk has benefited my elbow in any way.

Think very carefully over the article about prayer[3] which I am sending with this. You will find it very easy to understand. If you understand it, you will also be able to explain its meaning to others. I see from my experience that, instead of our time being wasted in that way, our mind seems to become lighter and we feel less the burden of work or responsibility. These days I think frequently about prayer, and especially about individual prayer. Rambha[4] had taught me to pray when I was a mere child, and so prayer has become a most natural thing for me. But I still see short-comings in me. If perfect wakefulness is achieved, the grandeur of that state would make everything else seem meaningless.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M.U./I Also C W. 8239. Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

[1] A Sindhi inmate who worked at the Ashram farm

[2] Dr Balwantrai Kanuga

[3] *Vide* pp 245-6

[4] Gandhiji's nurse, *vide* Vol. XXXIX, p. 31.

215. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN RANA

July 16, 1932

CHI. NARMADA,

If what has been written to me on your behalf is true, that does you credit. No human being can protect your chastity. You alone can do that. And if you have complete faith in God, you may rest assured that it will be protected. Ask the women in the Ashram to explain to you the meaning of the first verse[1] in the women's prayer. Though the prayer was addressed by Draupadi, it is meant for all women. Don't look upon it as merely the prayer of a woman one or two thousand years ago. It can protect, like a shield, [the honour of] any woman who is in distress.

I cannot advise you from here whether you should go to a court or not. I cannot even decide that. I must know all the relevant circumstances. On this matter, therefore, you should follow the advice of somebody whom you trust. But in any case you must have confidence in your mind that, no matter where you are taken and kept, you can protect your chastity without anybody's help. You may be certain that such confidence will give you the necessary strength. If, however, you have resolved to live as a virgin for your whole life, you should study further and keep your mind engaged in some work of service.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C.W 2757. Courtesy Ramnarayan N Pathak

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 399, No 56.

216 LETTER TO SHAMBHUSHANKAR TRIVEDI

[*July 16, 1932*][1]

DEAR SHAMBHUSHANKAR,

Received your letter. See what I have written in Narandas's letter[2] regarding Narmada. In such matters I cannot give any advice from here. Where a pleader requires to be consulted, he should be consulted. This is wisdom After that if the Ashram has to do anything, Narandas has full authority. He may do whatever his duty dictates See the letter I am writing to Narmada.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40), p 319

217. INDIVIDUAL PRAYER

July 17, 1932

Though I have already written once on this subject,[3] I feel that I should again write something about its importance. It seems to me that one reason why people feel no interest in community prayers may be that they do not realize the necessity of individual prayer. The idea of community prayers arose from the individual's need for prayer. If individuals do not feel such a need, how can a community? Community prayers also are for the benefit of individuals. They help people in their effort to attain knowledge of the self—for self-purification. It is, therefore, necessary that all of us should understand the importance of individual prayer. As soon as a child learns to understand things, its mother ought to teach it to pray. This practice is common to all religions.

There are at least two clear times for such prayer, that is, we should turn our mind to the Lord within immediately on awaken-

[1] *Vide* the preceding item
[2] *Vide* pp 242-3.
[3] *Vide* pp. 68-9

ing in the morning and when closing our eyes for sleep in the evening. During the rest of the day, every man and woman who is spiritually awake will think of God when doing anything and do that with Him as witness. Such a person will never do anything evil, and a time will come when he or she will think every thought with God as witness and as its Master. This will be a state in which one will have reduced oneself to a cipher. Such a person, who lives constantly in the sight of God, will every moment feel Rama dwelling in his heart.

For such prayers, no special *mantra* or *bhajan* is necessary. Though generally a *mantra* is recited at the commencement and conclusion of every religious act, that is not at all necessary We have only to turn our thoughts to God, no matter by what name we call Him, by what method and in what condition. Very few form such a habit. If most people followed this practice, there would be less sin and evil in this world and our dealings with one another would be pure. In order that we may attain such a pure state, everybody should pray at least at the two times which I have mentioned. Each person may fix other hours, too, according to his convenience, and gradually increase their frequency so that, ultimately his every breath will be accompanied with Ramanama.

Such individual prayer consumes no time at all. It requires not time but wakefulness As we don't feel that the unceasing action of blinking consumes any time, so also we do not feel that praying inwardly does. But we are aware that the eye-lids are doing their work; similarly prayer should go on constantly in our heart. Anybody who wishes to pray in this manner should know that he cannot do with an impure heart. He must, therefore, banish all impurity from his heart when praying. As one feels ashamed of doing anything wicked when being observed by somebody, so also should one feel ashamed of acting similarly in the sight of God. But God watches every action and knows every thought of ours. Hence there can be no moment when we can do anything or think any thought unobserved by Him. Thus, anybody who prays to God with his heart will in the end become filled with Him and so become sinless.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati· M M U /II

218 LETTER TO KUSUMBEHN DESAI

July 17, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I got your letter It does not answer all my questions. I cannot remember now your replies to my questions put to you orally. It would not be proper for me to write anything on the basis of [my impression of] your replies. That is why I put down the questions in writing. But I will not trouble you further. I shall see what I can do on the basis of the material you have supplied. The description which you have given of your condition is sad, but I do not despair I am confident that you are vigilant. And since you are also striving to the best of your ability, I should like you to have trust that you will get some day the required strength. If you lose faith in yourself, other people's faith is hardly likely to help you.

All three of us keep well. We spend a good deal of our time in studies.

Writing and receiving letters has become uncertain now.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati· G N 1842

219. LETTER TO MOHAN N. PARIKH

July 17, 1932

DEAR MOHAN,

I was glad that you wrote to me. Tell me in your next letter how you spent the *ekadashi*[1] day. Uncle Mahadev sends his blessings to you, and Sardar also would send his if you give him your respects in your letter. I forget, I see that you have done that. So accept his blessings too.

Improve your handwriting. There should be no blots.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. S N. 9181

[1] Eleventh day of the lunar fortnight, traditionally a day of fasting for Hindus

220. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

July 17, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

Should we not believe that you are unlucky? I sent the birthday blessings by return of post, but the letter[1] itself was held back here. I don't know if it was posted yesterday What good do blessings conveyed in a letter do? You should be satisfied if my heart showered blessings on you, which it certainly did. We never know how a person feels in his heart It is the heart which matters; all else is false.

You must cure the pain in your back. It can have some connection with your monthly periods Are they normal? I feel the same doubt about Anandi, Mani and Mangala. Talk with the girls and find out. It is probably time for Mani to begin to have menses. I remember that she was three years old when she was brought to the Ashram. She should be sixteen now. Mangala, too, may be of the same age. Know from them all the facts.

If any of the women who have joined the Ashram recently can write, ask them to write to me. Get into close contact with Narmada. Her story is a painful one.

I do not know the life of President Wilson. I am told that he was a good man and that his motives were sincere.

The last War seems to have done no good. Moral bonds have weakened and hatred has increased. The war mentality is not less strong today than it was before the War and the lure of power and pelf has become stronger.

We can certainly pray for some person or with a material aim, and such prayer may even be rewarded. But prayer which is inspired by no such motive is probably more beneficial to the *atman* and the world. Prayer produces an effect on oneself, that is, it awakens further the Indwelling Spirit and, as the latter becomes more and more awakened, the area of its influence becomes wider. What I have said above about the heart is applicable here. Prayer is a matter of the heart. Saying it aloud and similar other activities are intended to awaken the heart. The Infinite Power which exists outside us also exists inside us

[1] *Vide* pp 118-9.

and is equally infinite there. The body is no obstacle to Its operation The obstacle is created by us. Prayers remove that obstacle. We do not know in any particular instance whether or not our prayers have answered our wish. If I pray for Narmada to be delivered from her suffering and if she becomes free from it, I should not assume that that was the result of my prayer. Such prayer is never in vain, but we do not know how it bears fruit. Moreover, when the effect for which we had prayed follows, we need not believe that it is necessarily for our good In this matter, too, we should follow the path shown in the *Gitabodh*. Prayers should be offered in a spirit of non-attachment. Even when we have prayed for some person, we can remain unconcerned with the result. We may pray for a person to be delivered from his suffering because we think that is for his good, but we should remain unconcerned whether or not he becomes free Because the effect is the opposite of what we had prayed for, we need not believe that our prayers have not been answered. Tell me if you want me to explain the matter still further.

Remember about the list of Urdu books which I have asked you to send. It is quite uncertain now when you will get this letter and when I shall get your reply. We should however cultivate and feel certainty in the midst of uncertainty.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N 10294. Also C W 5750 Courtesy. Premabehn Kantak

221. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

July 17, 1932

DEAR DEVDAS,

Received your letter dated 30th June, written on the back of the Urdu letter of Hamid Ali, yesterday noon, that is, on the 16th July. Nowadays my post has become very irregular. It comes to me after taking a big round. It must be said to be my good fortune that I get it in spite of that—what rights a prisoner has? Imprisonment means absence of rights As I take the meaning of imprisonment to be this I can keep my mind steady. Similar is the case with visits. For the most part you will be able to see Mahadev. But there cannot be prepared a timetable as you think. Either you should take the risk of not being granted an interview or you should give up the desire of visit-

ing him. I would have been glad no doubt to see you and Lakshmi if I could, but the step taken by me certainly seems to be proper. Ba will feel the shock the most But she is born to endure shocks. All those who form or keep connections with me must pay a heavy price It can be said that Ba has to pay the heaviest. I have this much satisfaction that Ba has lost nothing by it.[1]

As soon as I received a telegram about Varadachari I also wired to him.[2] I also wrote letters. I got receipt of my wire also by wire through Rajaji. Yesterday I received a letter from Lakshmi to that effect; in it there is no receipt of my letter[3] on the subject. But my post about that time went the wrong way.

None of us had the idea that you are to be released in September. It does not seem that you will be transferred from there, though I got a detailed report of your health from H.E the Governor I hope that your health will not suffer now. The presence of Hanumanprasad proved to be much peace-giving to me I find from Hamid Ali's letter that he had sent *Ramacharcha* also. I am reading it. I read the stories about martyred lad, agriculture, alchemist, etc. It is true that I could not understand some words Otherwise there was no difficulty I have not got yet the book[4] on *arogya*, i e , sanitation, from anywhere It will be better if *Al-Faruk* is not received from Delhi. We had a copy in the Ashram I have asked for it I will read it after I finish *Ramacharcha* I like it. I now remember to have read it before I find the meanings I had noted down in it It is not wrong if this book is read two-three times You must be writing to Hamid Ali and others in English You must form a habit to write in Urdu My idea is to write a short letter in Urdu to him. His handwriting resembles that of a professional writer. He must be a professional writer. We have lost the art of writing. It is still preserved in Urdu

The reason why I am taking milk is the (persuasion of the) Superintendent of this place He was disturbed and my health had a little bit given way and hence I am taking milk. There was no necessity for it. It was likely that the health would become normal soon But I thought it wise not to carry on experiments

[1] This paragraph has been collated with the Gujarati in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I

[2] *Vide* "Telegram to C Rajagopalachari", p 152.

[3] *Vide* "Letter to Lakshmi", pp. 167-8

[4] *Guide to Health*, *vide* p. 258

here. I do not see any benefit of taking milk in particular for the present. The weight which had gone down had increased, that is, it is 105½ lb It had gone to 103 lb I do not see any effect of taking milk on the hand. The pain was already there when I was taking milk But this pain cannot be said to afflict me Because it aches only when the elbow is given a particular movement. When that movement is stopped there is no pain. Such movement is (almost) stopped. There is no cause for anxiety at all.

Vallabhbhai has begun spinning on the Gandiva spinning-wheel and also the study of Sanskrit When he heard that Rajaji was studying it, he became enthusiastic over it. He has begun the study in right earnest. He had sent for the 24 parts of Satavlekar's guide. He has finished (in six days) the first part thereof. Now he is reading the second part. His study is going on very briskly. The books by Satavlekar are on the whole good They are easy to learn. Perhaps you must have seen and read them also. My study of Urdu, astronomy and political economy is going on. At intervals I read some religious books also As for instance I read *Vaidik Vinay* of Abhay Sharma[1]. Now I am reading a book called *Swadhyaya Samhita*[2]. It contains selections from the Vedas and other books, and below them there is a translation in Hindi. Mahadev is learning French and reads something else also. He writes for me if there is anything. He devotes one hour for Vallabhbhai. He also cooks bread for me. I take bread instead of the bread from the bakery. There is no chaff in the bread from the bakery, while it is contained in the bread prepared at home. That is the reason of going back to the *roti*. I am writing letters with my own hand because mostly while observing silence I am writing letters. I also get most of them written (by someone). Whatever I write I do not feel any difficulty in writing with my right hand. I am not allowed to write with the left hand, and hence I use the right hand. I am writing the history of the Ashram during leisure.[3] I hope to finish it in a short time. I am spinning on the Magan spinning-wheel.

Jalbhai Naoroji can now move about. He has escaped just from death.

I have returned Rajaji's letter to you. I am wondering about your letter dated 2nd June. I will cause a search to

[1] Abhaydev Sharma, Acharya, Gurukul, Kangri

[2] By Vaidikmuni Hariprasadji

[3] *Vide* pp. 188-236

be made here again. Whatever (blessings) you like from my companions.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II p 331. Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I, pp 296-7

222. LETTER TO MADALASA BAJAJ

July 17, 1932

CHI. MADALASA[1],

The word *abhiman*[2] connotes an undesirable quality, whereas *swabhiman*[3] connotes a good one. If you think yourself an important person being a big man's daughter, you would be *abhimani*[4]. If, however, somebody tries to insult you but you are not intimidated by him, you will be said to have preserved your *swabhiman* or *swaman*. Why doesn't Om[5] write?

Kamala[6], of course, I must not expect to write.

Babu[7] must be growing very fast now. Does he still love to eat plenty of sweets?

Don't be lazy in writing to me. Ask Balkrishna[8] to write too.

[From Gujarati]

Panchwen Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p 313

223. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR

July 17, 1932

DEAR RAMESHWARDAS,

The adjective 'dear' must have been written by mistake. I cannot make one my 'dear'. He who wishes to be my 'dear' ought to wear a chain[9] on the neck. He cannot escape under the pretext of weakness. You appear to be a pucca bania. You escape,

[1] Daughter of Jamnalal Bajaj
[2] Pride
[3] Self-respect
[4] Proud
[5] & [6] Sisters of the addressee
[7] Addressee's younger brother, Ramakrishna
[8] Balkoba, younger brother of Vinoba Bhave
[9] The source has "put on a necklace".

(bringing) in the pretext of weakness wherever (possible). How can such (a man) become my 'dear'? If the observance of the fast of the eleventh day is in name only, God and society may be humbly told that you have no strength to observe a fast. But you cannot fight shy of it thus The few vows which may have been taken should be firmly adhered to and fully observed. From this, enormous strength may be created.

Now Vinoli[1] must be happy. Make arrangements about Ram as he says. A father should not pass on his own weakness to his descendants. He must safeguard their interest as far as he can. Dasharatha[2] preferred death and allowed Rama to go out into the jungle Remembering this, acquire strength.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstacts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800 (40)(3), Pt. II, p 313

224. LETTER TO LAKSHMI

July 17, 1932

DAUGHTER LAKSHMI,

I have received your letter. Devdas had sent a wire to me in respect of Varadachari and so I wrote a letter[3] to you which you must have received (by now). Along with it a letter (each) was sent for Anna and Papa. What further consolation can I give? All (our) sufferings vanish when we entertain no fear of death and consider it as our greatest friend. Why should we grieve since the soul is deathless? This idea should be strengthened. Well, I hope Narasimhan[4] has not hastened to you. If he has, tell Anna that he should go back.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. LAKSHMI
GANDHI ASHRAM
TIRUCHENGODU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 339

[1] Presumably Vinoba; *vide* p. 81
[2] King of Ayodhya, father of Rama
[3] *Vide* pp 167-8.
[4] Addressee's brother

225. LETTER TO KHODIDAS H. SHAH

July 17, 1932

BROTHER KHODIDAS,

If you have taken a vow, it is your duty (religion)[1] to observe it.

MOHANDAS

MR. KHODIDAS H. SHAH
ROJID
KATHIAWAR

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 301

226 LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

July 17, 1932

BOYS AND GIRLS,

Why is the holiday of the eleventh of the bright half of *Ashadha* (regarded) a special holiday? It has been known so far that the holiday of the eleventh day is for fasting. But Premabehn seems to have discovered something. Explain to her My complaint is not in regard to the observing of the holiday in a new way. I want [you] to understand its significance. A student should try to realize the significance of anything he does.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 309

[1] Presumably the original had "dharma".

227. LETTER TO MANI

July 17, 1932

DEAR MANI[1],

I thought you would never fall ill, then how is it that you fell ill again? You do not write letters now. Do you like to stay at the Ashram? Why did you come away from Mother? Write to me everything in detail. Write also openheartedly what your desires are.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II p 311

228. LETTER TO ANANDI

July 17, 1932

DEAR ANANDI,

It seems you are again down with fever. Why do you not find out the cause? Now you are taking Dr. Kanuga's pills. Let me know what is their effect You must continue to write whether you receive mine or not.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 311

[1] Youngest daughter of Lakshmidas Asar

229. *LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH*

July 17, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

We do not know if people meditated upon Bharata and Rama during their lifetime. Experience tells us that people are worshipped only after their death. It is a different thing that they are honoured while they are still alive. We may not call it *dhyana*[1]. A living human being can certainly not be regarded as perfect And, worship and *dhyana* would be appropriate only with reference to perfect beings. It would be harmful to worship one who has faults or who is likely to do something wrong, for we would become like those whom we meditate I do not have the power nor the wish to perform miracles as Christ did. How can there be any comparison between him and me? He was a very great man indeed. Write to Bhai that he should write to me.

You must continue to put on weight.

Do you not realize the difference between the bodily structure of man and woman? Whatever differences you see can be seen, one may say, with the naked eye. A man has moustaches, a woman has none. A woman bears children, a man does not. A woman suckles her child, a man does not. Are these differences not plain enough to be clear to everyone? And this means a little difference in their functions and training.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original C W 9954 Courtesy Shardabehn G Chokhawala

[1] Meditation

230. LETTER TO CHHOTUBHAI

July 17, 1932

DEAR CHHOTUBHAI[1],

Received your letter. If just now you continue to remain at the Ashram for looking after your father, then there will be no objection to his staying there; otherwise I am of opinion that the Ashram will not be able to look after him and at such a time such a burden should not be allowed to fall on the Ashram. After thinking over the account received from you about his constipation, I see only one remedy and it is that unless he observes 10-15 fasts at a stretch, his stomach will not be cleansed. But only he and you can say if he has strength to do so. His strength does not mean his bodily strength, but his strength of mind. Even if he observes fast, some treatment must be taken side by side, that is, drinking a good deal of water and taking enema daily.

It does not seem that your father knows how to write, because the whole letter has been written by you. And so I do not write separately to him.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, pp. 315-7

231. LETTER TO HAMID ALI KHAN[2]

July 17, 1932

BROTHER HAMID ALI,

Devdas has sent your letter to me for perusal. I am grateful to you for the books sent to me. I am still reading *Ramacharcha* (i.e., life of Rama). I have finished other books. All the three books have pleased me. There was not much difficulty in understanding them. Please do not send *Al-Faruq* (life of Faruq, the 2nd Caliph of Islam) as I have got it with me (here). But do send

[1] The source has "Chhonbhai"; *vide*, however, p 242.

[2] Of Jamia Millia

some other books which in your opinion may be quite all right for me. Convey *vandemataram* to all the brothers of the Jamia.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

I have not as yet got *Guide to Health*[1]. I have written to Devdas about it. I am very sorry to hear about the burning of the press.

GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 337

232. LETTER TO INDU N. PAREKH

July 17, 1932

DEAR INDU,

If you are well, certainly attend the prayers. Sitting here I cannot know (anything) about your demand. Do as Narandas asks you to do. Has your life been made regular? Can you concentrate your mind on study? Has the confusion of your mind lessened? Has (it) begun to understand its responsibility? Think about all these things.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 309

233. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

July 18, 1932

MY DEAR CHILD,

I have your letter. Do not fret, if you don't hear from me at the expected moment. My correspondence has been upset a bit. I am hoping that the matter will be soon put right. However, a prisoner has got to be satisfied with the facilities that may be given to him for the natural satisfaction of his healthy wants.

When you see the invalid sister, you must tell her I often think of her. I wonder if you ever visit that little school[2] in your neighbourhood for defective children. I thought the institution had earnest workers. If you have the time, I would like you to know more of the institution and its managers and tell me how it progresses.

[1] An English version, published in India, of the Gujarati articles contributed by Gandhiji to *Indian Opinion* in 1913, *vide* Vols XI and XII

[2] Gandhiji visited it when he went to England for the Round Table Conference in 1931.

You tell me how desolate Bajaj's house looked for want of the woman's touch. I have always considered this a result of our false notions of division of work between men and women. Division there must be. But this utter helplessness on the man's part when it comes to keeping a household in good order and woman's helplessness when it comes to be a matter of looking after herself (more here than in the West) are due to erroneous upbringing. Why should man be so lazy as not to keep his house neat, if there is no woman looking after it, or why should a woman feel that she always needs a man protector? This anomaly seems to me to be due to the habit of regarding woman as fit primarily for housekeeping and of thinking that she must live so soft as to feel weak and be always in need of protection. We are trying to create a different atmosphere at the Ashram. It is difficult work. But it seems to be worth doing.

Remember me and Mahadev to Mrs. Winston when you write to her.

Kisses to the children.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat No 112. Courtesy: National Archives of India Also *My Dear Child*, pp. 92-3

234. LETTER TO PRINCESS EFY ARISTARCHI

July 18, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I have to thank you once more for your lovely gifts. I have got the beautiful book *The Way of the Cross* with your markings and the crucifixion cards with helpful descriptions and thoughtful quotations made by you at the back.

I hope all your troubles are over and if they are not, God has blessed you with sufficient wisdom to regard them, in the language of one of your quotations, as "blessings in disguise".

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

PRINCESS ARISTARCHI
HOTEL SCHOTZKY
FREIBURG I.B , GERMANY

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 253

235. LETTER TO GANESHDATTA

July 18, 1932

DEAR GANESHDATTAJI,

I have received your book. Prisoners are not permitted to write a foreword.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 251

236. LETTER TO NARHARI DEVSARMA[1]

July 18, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. As you know, it is not open to me to argue about matters political. But I can heartily endorse your remark that all the leaders must bear the natural consequences of their actions.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. NARHARI DEVSARMA
BARRACKPORE TANK ROAD
BARRACKPORE

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 253 Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I, p 299

[1] The addressee had said in his letter that the leaders were responsible for the people's suffering

237. LETTER TO NATWARLAL

July 19, 1932

DEAR NATWARLAL,

Your letter has been received. It is very good that you have been plying the *takli*. To ply the *takli* does not mean drawing out a thread. But it is drawing 160 yards of yarn of at least 12 counts of uniform twist per hour so that there may be no difficulty in weaving. One should not have even any confidence about letters from one in jail Your letter came to my hand today, that is, fourteen days after you wrote it. It remains to be seen when this reaches you. In these circumstances there is no meaning in my replying by return of post. But your vow is such that you must have adhered to it on the ground of not receiving my letter. This will certainly do you good. And if you can pull on without tea and sugar for so many days, how can you not do without them for ever? We know from the lives of crores (of people) in this world that both these things are unnecessary, inasmuch as they are acquainted neither with tea nor sugar. About jail life the life of one in jail cannot be written at length. But to the prisoners whose mind is innocent this life happens to be peaceful and elevating.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 289

238. LETTER TO S. D. SATAVLEKAR

July 19, 1932

BHAI SATAVLEKAR,

I got your letter only today. The Sanskrit Readers came earlier but I was awaiting your letter. May I thank you for the Readers? I have received so many books from you! *Purushartha* and other things keep coming. You will be gratified to learn that Sardar has completed the first two Readers and has gone on to the third. We are jotting down the errors that come to our

notice. We had already decided to inform you of them even before the receipt of your letter There is no doubt that on the whole the Readers are very well planned. Whatever mistakes we observe will be pointed out to you only with the purpose of enhancing the utility of the series.

My arm does not give too much pain. The left elbow pains only with a particular movement. The Superintendent gave me *Lakshadi* oil to be used for massage but it did no good. In fact, this oil helps only when the pain is caused by rheumatism but the pain in my elbow joint is not rheumatic So far the doctors have diagnosed it as the result of constant employment of the elbow in plying the charkha. For that reason I have given up using the left arm in spinning for almost a month. It cannot be said that it has resulted in any improvement. So now I am to undergo intensive treatment. There is no cause for worry; my health is, on the whole, good enough.

What you have written about *Vishwaroopadarshanayoga*[1] is quite correct, but it does not in any way contradict what I have written in the preface[2] to that chapter. The man who sees the whole world as a manifestation of Vasudeva is bound to have a vision of the Cosmic Form but the Form will be that of his own imagining. A Christian who considers the creation as a divine manifestation will visualize an image to suit his notions. Our way of worship determines the form of God in our mind. One born and bred in the Hindu culture will never tire of reading the eleventh chapter and if he be a devotee, he will be able to picture to himself the magnificent form described therein. Such imagery is not beyond a man's imagination in this world. We may call the divine force as Brahman, *Atman* or Vasudeva, yet it remains formless. Only for the devotee it acquires dimensions; that is its expression and therein lies its poetic appeal. We can make only one deduction which you have already drawn. We must be able to see Vasudeva or God even in a dacoit. When we have acquired the strength to do that, the dacoit will give up his wickedness. And until we acquire this power all our learning and knowledge is worthless. You have not expected my comments upon your writing on *Vishwaroopadarshana*, yet I have written all this as I

[1] "Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form" in the *Gita*, the addressee had said in his letter that there was not only poetry in Chapter XI of the *Gita* as Gandhiji had made out, but also the vital truth that God is immanent in all created objects which are only different parts of His body.

[2] In the *Anasaktiyoga*, *vide* Vol. XLI, p 125.

am engrossed with the same thoughts It gives me great pleasure to carry on such conversations with you through letters.

I have finished reading '*Vaidik Vinay*' by Abhayji. Now I am reading *Swadhyaya Samhita* by Vaidikmuni Hariprasadji. But I find great difficulty in reading the Vedic hymns. You are acquainted with my knowledge of Sanskrit, it is of the most elementary order, and as regards Vedic Sanskrit it is almost nil. I know this much, that Vedic hymns have been interpreted in several ways by different scholars—by Sanatanis in one way, by Arya Samajists in another and by Western scholars in yet another. Even among the sanatanis I find difference of opinion. All Arya Samajists too are not agreed upon the same meaning You must be remembering the correspondence between yourself and Vaidyaji that I initiated.[1] In the light of all this I feel bewildered when I try to study the Vedic hymns and find myself at a loss to decide upon any interpretation. At present I am memorizing *Ishopanishad.* I think Shankara's interpretation of it differs from that of Aurobindo Babu; and your interpretation that I saw last year while in jail differs from both. I have now received a translation in Gujarati. This and Hariprasadji's translation are again at variance I have understood this Upanishad in my own way which seems somewhat presumptuous in view of my scanty knowledge of Sanskrit. Is there any work available from which I may learn the rudiments of Vedic grammar and does a collection exist containing different annotations by various scholars? In short, what should a man like myself do when confronted with interpreting correctly the Vedic *mantras*? I have not faith enough in any sect to accept their interpretation as gospel truth. Luckily or unluckily I possess just enough knowledge of Sanskrit to choose from several interpretations available to me. But I have no desire to collect a large library while I am in jail nor do I wish to involve myself in a deep study. *Gita* suffices for my own contentment. But I do like to dabble in the Vedas. Therefore please oblige me by giving whatever information you can. We are all well.

Yours,

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Hindi. C.W. 4763. Courtesy. S. D. Satavlekar

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXXV, p. 56.

239. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

July 20, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

Your letter, posted on the 18th, reached me on the 20th. But I don't know what will happen to mine The officials here tell me that the packet which I had handed over on the 4th was dispatched on the 16th. All the letters are sent to the Secretariat for censoring, and are posted when received back here after being passed. I simply cannot understand why they should do this. I have been trying to find out, of course. I don't know if I shall succeed. We should go on writing to each other as usual and not worry when the letters will reach their destination. We should not think about the matter at all We should be ready in our minds to face the possibility of the correspondence stopping altogether and be sure that we shall not feel upset even then.

Ask Prabhudas to write to me. Two days ago the doctor permitted me to rotate the Gandiva wheel with the left hand, and so I have started spinning on the Gandiva. I appreciate it all the more after my experience with the Magan spinning-wheel. My yarn became fine immediately and the threads also snapped rarely. I still draw the thread with the right hand. There are some defects in the spinning-wheel, and when I have removed them it will work still more smoothly. Comparing it with the Magan spinning-wheel, I see that I cannot acquire speed on the latter. Hence I think that for spinning with one spindle only, the Gandiva or the ordinary spinning-wheel is better. For anybody who cannot use either of his hands for drawing the thread or for rotating the wheel, the Magan spinning-wheel is an invaluable invention Obviously, anyone who can use both his hands can spin more. But we cannot spin yarn of the highest count on it. A few changes may perhaps help us to do it. It is also possible that our speed on it may increase if we make some modifications so that we can spin on it with one spindle only. But all this requires experimentation My experience of it in its present form is what I have described it to be. I can say that I have now acquired excellent control over the pedals.

I have been permitted to spin on the Gandiva wheel not because there is any improvement in the condition of my elbow

but because complete rest has not benefited it in any way The assumption behind this is that the pain may not have been caused by the strain of [rotating] the wheel when spinning. I shall know for certain in a few days.

I am happy that Dr. Talwalkar charges two rupees for conveyance and gives a bill for the medicines If we call him only once or twice in a year, he can afford to charge us nothing, but he cannot afford to do so when he gives us medicines as frequently as he does. He is not so rich As for conveyance, I think we have been paying it for a long time Dr. Talwalkar's sending us bills for medicines is likely to have one result. Through laxity we may have been calling him during all this time even when it might not be necessary If that is so, our laxity should go now. In any case, if we are scrupulous in following dharma, we should feel extremely reluctant to accept anybody's free services But most people certainly do not behave in that way. Because water costs nothing, we use it freely and do not feel ashamed in doing so. On the contrary, we ask why we should not use it freely when it costs nothing. And as we are careless about using water because it costs nothing, we feel in the same way about other services or things which we get free This is a violation of our vow of non-stealing, besides being a violation of the vow of ahimsa too

I have had no letter from Ba. I wrote one letter to her many days ago, to which I got no reply. And so I have not written to her recently I simply do not understand what happens to these letters I will write once again to her, and put the letter[1] with this. If you get it, show it to the Jail Superintendent there and give it to Ba. I hope all those who had got cold have recovered now. There is a wire from Devdas informing me that he had a mild relapse of fever. If you get this letter and if Shanti is there at the time, give him and his wife my blessings and tell him that I was happy that he had gone there. Did he get my letter? I wrote it to him at Rajkot

It will be enough if you send the slivers, given by Chhakkaddas, to Dahyabhai with anybody who may be going to that side. I have a stock of other slivers with me. It will not matter, therefore, if Chhakkaddas's arrive a little late.

Is Parnerkar's health all right? I am sure Prithuraj[2] is quite well

It seems to me from your description that Shankarbhai had a narrow escape. Anyone falling from the roof of the kitchen is

[1] *Vide* pp 271-2.

[2] Son of Lakshmidas Asar

hardly likely to survive, as the roof is at a fairly good height. I hope his arm is all right now.

I have fully explained my views regarding Sitala Sahay in a previous letter.[1] You will know what they are if you get it. I have also written about Parnerkar's mother,[2] as also about Narmada.[3]

The Jailor informed us that Mahadev's letter to Durga, written on the 11th, was posted on the 14th. But you had not got it till the 18th, from which it seems that the letters are being tampered with there too.

You should assume that for some time now you cannot be certain of getting my letters—as for the future, let us wait and see what happens. You will find more about this in my letter to Premabehn.[4]

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati. M M U /I Also C W 8240 Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

240. *TELEGRAM TO SUPERINTENDENT, CENTRAL JAIL, LAHORE*

[Before *July 21, 1932*][5]

SUPERINTENDENT
CENTRAL JAIL
LAHORE

HEAR KHURSHEDBAI NAOROJI HAD OPERATION. PRAY INFORM ME CAUSE OPERATION AND PRESENT CONDITION.

GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I G P File No 9

[1] *Vide* p 184.
[2] *Vide* pp 146-7.
[3] *Vide* p 242.
[4] *Vide* pp 283-5.
[5] The jail authorities forwarded this to the Home Secretary, Poona, for orders on July 21, 1932.

241. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

July 21, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I have before me your letter and postcard. The body will take its toll. We never know when we commit a breach of the laws that govern the body. And in nature as in human law ignorance is no excuse. Your fever therefore does not surprise me.[1] I expect that the energetic remedy adopted by you checked the progress of malaria. Yes at such times services of friends become a boon and induce an early recovery. I know what lavish care is bestowed upon guests in Sivaprasad Babu's[2] home. I am glad you are having these sweet experiences. It makes attacks such as you had not only bearable but even a prized visitation in that they enable one to understand human nature at its best. And when it acts equally towards all and in all circumstances, it approaches the divine.

Your description of Ganga is quite poetic. I felt much the same as you have done. And it was probably the same spot where I was walking. I wrote my impressions for *Navajivan*.[3] This was quite 10 years ago I think.

Milk diet still continues. The weight is 105½ lb. It has produced no effect on the elbow. I feel no better than when I was taking almonds and bread. So far as the bowels are concerned, I was most assuredly better under that diet than the milk diet.

I do not know when you will get this letter. The disturbance of my correspondence still continues. The incoming post has become regular but there is much delay about the outgoing post. I am in correspondence with the Government about [it].[4] I cannot understand this sudden disturbance at all. But there it is. Fortunately for the peace of my mind I commenced my career as a prisoner even in South Africa with the assumption that a prisoner had no rights. If you are still outside prison walls,

[1] After her arrival at Varanasi from Chhapra the addressee had a severe attack of malaria

[2] A Congress leader of Varanasi

[3] *Vide* Vol XVII, p 56

[4] *Vide* letters to Doyle, pp 174-5, 237-8 and also 272-3.

you will know why you do not get my letters regularly, if you do not.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Remember us to all the friends. If you at all can, try to see Devdas. He is so near you.

SHRIMATI MIRABAI
C/o BABU SIVAPRASAD GUPTA
SEVA UPVAN
NAGWA
BENARES

From a photostat C W 9508 Courtesy Mirabehn

242. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

July 21, 1932

MY DEAR DEVDAS,

The telegram from Hanumanprasadji today causes anxiety. It seems that there is an attack of fever again It is stated in the telegram that the attack is a mild one. Hence I believe that by the time you get this letter you must have completely recovered. You must have received the letter (I) wrote before this Still there is no certainty about the post dispatched by me. It seems that my letters take many days to get through (the scrutiny) The letters are being nicely scrutinized. You must be certainly careful of your health. Whatever the climate, I believe that it can be kept under control by effecting suitable changes in the diet. Write to me why there was a set-back again

It seems that I get my post regularly again We all three are happy. Vallabhbhai is learning Sanskrit like an industrious schoolboy. He devotes many hours to its study He has finished two parts and is reading the third. There will be no wonder if he finishes all the 24 parts within four or five months at this rate. Yet, it will be considered a wonder and a miracle if he begins to understand the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* in original.

Blessings from
BAPU

DEVDAS GANDHI
DISTRICT JAIL
GORAKHPUR, U.P.

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800 (40)(3), Pt II, p 353

243. LETTER TO SONIRAMJI

July 21, 1932[1]

BROTHER SONIRAMJI[2],

I am in receipt of your letter.[3] I have heard many interpretations of the occult significance of the sacred thread. But all these interpretations are only guesses. I do not think that all these ideas were present at the time when the sacred thread came into use. Those people who described themselves as Aryans adopted the use of the sacred thread in order to distinguish between Aryans and non-Aryans This must have happened at the time when the art of making cloth from cotton was discovered. Crores of people merely put on the dhoti then, as they do even now, with the rest of the body uncovered. In any case those who are believed to be non-Aryans did so. The Aryans, therefore, adopted the symbol of the sacred thread in order to encourage and improve the art of spinning and prove that it was sacred work. I have no evidence from history in support of this statement. It is only my conjecture. Today there is no distinction—and there ought not to be any—between Aryans and non-Aryans. An admixture of blood between the two races took place thousands of years ago and the present inhabitants of India are the progeny of such an admixture If the sacred thread is to be worn at all, all [the castes] should have the right to wear it I see no meaning in such a movement For this reason, after giving up the use of the sacred thread I never tried to wear it again nor do I wish to do so. Inasmuch as the practice of wearing the sacred thread is likely to have created the distinction between higher and lower castes, it should be discarded. I would advise Gauri Prasad to give up his infatuation for the sacred thread. It is the sign of a *brahmachari*. If a person observes *brahmacharya* that itself is the best sacred thread. Why is a cotton thread needed?[4]

To keep the water in a well clean it should be covered with a wire-netting. There ought not to be any dirt anywhere around it. The well should be deep and (a certain quantity of) "permanganate of potash" or chlorine should be put into it every month. The

[1],[2]&[3] From the English translation available in the Bombay Secret Abstracts

[4] What follows is from the English translation available in Bombay Secret Abstracts

quantity (of the drug) to be used should be ascertained from a doctor In addition to taking these precautions it would be advisable to get the water analysed from time to time.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp 323-4, and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, pp 403-5

244. LETTER TO KAPIL

July 21, 1932

DEAR KAPIL,

Received your letter. I am sorry to learn of your health. I think you should quietly improve your health and while improving health whatever service you can render, be satisfied with that.[1] To ply a *takli* is some service. Educate the children who may be in your vicinity or conduct night classes for those who are grown up. This is also service. We should purify ourselves as we advance in years and should not allow a single impure thought to enter our mind. This is, from my point of view, a service. And even a man on sick-bed can do this much.[2] You must indeed be observing the rules regarding prayers, etc. Do write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 323, and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 399

245. LETTER TO HANUMANPRASAD PODDAR

July 21, 1932

BROTHER HANUMANPRASAD,

Received your letter as also your telegram today. I shall not feel anxious about Devdas since you are there. Moreover Devdas had written to me that you treated him in a very loving manner. The doctor is really a good man. I shall always expect to receive letters from you from time to time.[3]

[1] What follows has been collated with the Gujarati in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I

[2] What follows is from the English rendering available in Bombay Secret Abstracts

[3] The following paragraph has been collated with the Hindi in *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I.

The man who resorts to falsehood with a view to acquiring worldly goods or for some other reason is full of attachment and hatred; he cannot possibly reach God.[1] And I consider the other example you have cited as impossible. To tread the path of truth and at the same time to remain aloof from worldly affairs, i e, from *pravritti* is a thing which is impossible like a flower in the sky. How can one tell what path one follows who keeps away from *pravritti*? To tread the path of truth in itself involves entrance into *pravritti*. Without *pravritti* there is no occasion for treading or not treading the path of truth. The holy *Gita* in its several verses has made it clear that a man cannot exist even for a moment without *pravritti*. The difference between a devotee and one who is not a devotee is this, that the first remains in *pravritti* with an eye to the highest good and while living in *pravritti* never lets go his hold upon truth and weakens attachments and aversions, while the other lives in a state of infatuation with *pravritti* and does not even try to remain aloof from such demoniac actions as falsehood, etc., while pursuing his object. These worldly affairs are not a thing to be looked upon with contempt. It is only through worldly affairs that a vision of the Lord is possible. Those worldly affairs that create infatuation deserve to be looked upon with contempt and always shunned. This is my firm opinion and experience.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p. 323, and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 401

246. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

[On or after *July 21, 1932*][2]

BA,

None can say what the matter is that you do not receive my letters and I do not receive yours? Hence I have not written any letters at present. When it is not certain that letters would reach you how can I like to write? I do receive information

[1] The addressee had asked "Can a man who resorts to untruth for worldly purposes see God? Or is the beatific vision possible for one who gives up all activities in order to be able to observe the truth?"

[2] From the reference to the relapse of Devdas's fever; *vide* also "Letter to Devdas Gandhi", p 268.

about you. Nimu writes to say that you appear to be losing strength. How is that? Is the food digested?

We are happy here. You must be knowing that I am at present taking milk. There was no special reason for taking it. The Superintendent here insisted and so I began to take it. I also take *roti* and vegetable. Vallabhbhai has begun to learn Sanskrit, and has also begun to work the spinning-wheel There is uncertainty about my letters at present and so it cannot be said what the fate of this will be.

Devdas has again fallen ill, but there is nothing to be anxious about.

You must have known of the death of Rajaji's son-in-law. If you have not written a letter of condolence, write one. Blessings to sisters.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800

247. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

July 22, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE,

I refer to my letter of 13th instant. My son at Gorakhpur too had a relapse. I have written to him a letter[1] that should cheer him. But I have no notion when it will be passed and sent to him. Another to a friend[2] in the Lahore Jail She has undergone an operation. A third to the sister of the missing Airman Jeejibhoi[3] Fourth to Shrimati Mirabai Slade[4] who is down with fever at Benares. And I am writing today a postcard[5] to a girl sending her and her people condolences on a family bereavement. All these letters to be of value should surely be sent at once or not at all. But from the manner in which the Ashram post is held up, how can I hope that the foregoing letters will be passed soon? I have a postcard from the Ashram telling me that my letter of 5th July was received there on 20th instant! The letters written

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Devdas Gandhi", p 268.

[2] Khurshedbehn Naoroji; *vide* "Telegram to Superintendent, Central Jail, Lahore", p. 266

[3] In the entry under date July 21, 1932 in "Diary, 1932", given as the last item in this volume, there is a reference to a letter to Shirinbai, but this letter is not available *Vide*, however, "Letter to Shirinbai", pp 294-5

[4] *Vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", pp 267-8.

[5] *Vide* "Letter to Rohinibehn Desai", p. 273.

on the 12th and 19th July have still evidently not been sent. They contain important instructions about ailing inmates and others in distress that has nothing to do with political matters. If the Government do not wish to withdraw their orders conveyed to me about my letters, I should be assured of their quick despatch. This delay in sending my letters to their destination seems to me to be highly unjust to me and hardly becoming for the Government. I have willingly broken no rule about my correspondence On the contrary I have tried to be meticulously correct in carrying out their instructions. I know no reason for this vexatious change in the disposition of my correspondence.

Could you please forward this to the Government and ascertain their wishes in the matter?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G P File No. 9

248. LETTER TO ROHINIBEHN DESAI

July 22, 1932

CHI. ROHINI,

I got a letter from Hamida today. She informs me that your maternal uncle has expired. All of you are being tested severely. Give condolences to Mother on behalf of all of us. Really speaking we should never grieve over death. If we regard death as a friend, then uncle has met a friend. We may, of course, mourn his death because of our selfishness. If, however, we look at the matter in proper light, it is our good fortune that all of us will meet that friend sooner or later. I have heard that Kanjibhai[1] also feels weak. Write to me and give me detailed news. Sardar also is eager to know about his health.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. ROHINIBEHN
C/O SJT. KANAIYALAL NANABHAI DESAI
GOPIPURA, SURAT

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2658

[1] Addressee's father, Kanaiyalal Desai

249. LETTER TO NIRMALABEHN GANDHI

July 22, 1932

DEAR NIMU,

You seem to be a very cunning girl. After showing that you have no time left, you turn the tables on me and say that you would devote as many hours as I would ask you to devote. But I have already written to you that the care you take of children resembles the Ashram work It does not matter if no note can be kept of that. If from that half an hour even—not to say an hour —is spared, that also can be noted. There is no shame in it.

If Hasu sends Vinay here [*sic*], then it will serve your purpose as well as mine. There will be two girls instead of one The elder girl has children. But there are two conditions Either Sumitra[1] may commit theft and be convicted, appear in male guise, be big after being drawn through a machine and appear to be sixteen years of age or she should have four instead of two legs and a tail! Then I may be permitted to keep a cat with four feet. Is Sumitra willing to become a cat with four feet and have a tail? If so, take medicine from Gangabehn who is going there, grow (additional) feet and tail and send (her).

Continue to write letters. All your troubles must have disappeared.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 397

250. LETTER TO NANDUBEHN B. KANUGA

July 22, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

When I was thinking of writing a letter to you, letters began to rain from you, maybe, on the Sardar. It may rain for any reason, but it must make all wet. The same is the case with us.

I knew that you were of a humorous nature, but I knew only

[1] Addressee's daughter

from your letter that you were overflowing with humour. You ask for my blessings, but they are always there.

You have been encouraging the Sardar well, but he is not a soft Bania like me. When he is inspired with courage from the heart, then only he will do what he wants to do. That is the case. Now he is enthusiastic over the study of Sanskrit, i.e., he has fully devoted himself to it. But there is no one here who can take credit[1] for that. His teacher is Mahadev In addition, comes the Gandiva spinning-wheel. That also when it occurred to him So the intentions you have formed to go shares with him are useless Yes, you can take the share you want from his knowledge of Sanskrit. If you say, we may send the same by wire.

What a shame that a doctor becomes toothless as I am. Tell Haribhai[2] that [the question is] when doctors become ill in whom we should have faith.

You and Lilavatibehn have lost, it seems, a good deal of your weight.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, pp 395-7

251. LETTER TO RAGHAVDASJI

July 22, 1932

MAHARAJ RAGHAVDASJI,

I have received the book sent by you. I shall go through it when I get time. No review can be sent from the jail. I would, therefore, like to be excused.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 365

[1] The source has 'glory'.
[2] Dr. Haribhai Desai of Ahmedabad

252. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

July 23, 1932

CHI. KAKA,

I have received your letter after waiting for a long time. As it is heavily censored, I have not been able to get full news about your health. I have of course written to Colonel Doyle about your health. I have suggested to him that he should send you to me, in which case your health will of course improve and we could also study astronomy and even write about it.

My suggestion is twofold. Either Shanker[1] and/or Bal[2] should be sent to you, or you should be sent to me. Shanker is here. He of course wishes to be near you and serve you. I have no direct communication from Bal but I keep getting news about him and the other boys. Someone or another writes from Visapur.

About astronomy my intention and purpose was as you had inferred. It was not in my mind that astronomy helps one to know the hour of the night by looking at the stars, nor was I thinking that the Vedic gods and goddesses are directly connected with planets, stars and constellations. I am familiar with Bhai Hiralal's ideas. I have read all the articles he sent me. All that is interesting. But my interest is of quite a different kind.

Looking at the sky the impression we get of infinity, of purity, of order and of grandeur is one that purifies us. It may perhaps be that on being able to reach the planets and the stars one will get the same experience of good and evil that one gets here on earth. But truly divine is the peaceful influence of their beauty and coolness at this great distance. Also when once we are able to establish communion with the heavens it does not matter where we may happen to be. It then becomes like receiving the Ganga in one's own home. All these thoughts have made me a keen watcher of the infinite skies. So I am acquiring knowledge of astronomy enough for my own satisfaction. At present I have gathered quite a collection of books on the subject. Professor Trivedi has sent me three books[3] by James Jeans. Of them I have read the

[1] Satish Kalelkar, addressee's elder son

[2] Addressee's second son

[3] *The Stars in Their Courses, The Universe around Us, Mysterious Universe*

two bigger ones. I like them both. I have now started a systematic study of astronomy. At present I am reading a book by Kharas. The author, it seems, has taken a good deal of trouble over it. The book is profusely illustrated, which is a great help. I find this book interesting because I have already read other books. Had I begun with this book I may not perhaps have liked it. No effort has been made to make it entertaining.

I cannot, as yet, write to you about the kind of book on astronomy which I want in Gujarati, as my ideas on the subject are still taking shape; it would be neither easy nor desirable to indicate a framework at this stage.

It is quite all right that your spinning is reduced. Nothing need be done at the risk of your health.

Vallabhbhai has added to his work of preparing envelopes. He spins ten slivers every day on the Gandiva spinning-wheel and is immersed in the study of Sanskrit. We have sent for all the 24 parts of Satavlekar's series. It is about a fortnight that he started the study and is already finishing the first three parts. This is really good progress. He will probably finish all the parts in four or five months. He aspires to know enough Sanskrit to be able to read the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

Mahadev has reduced his spinning by half. Too much time was taken up in spinning yarn of 40 counts. It was also very tiring for him. His yarn of 40 counts turns out to be very good.

I can't say that my left elbow is completely cured; but with the doctor's permission I have gone back from the Magan spinning-wheel to the Gandiva. But I turn the wheel with my left hand and draw the thread with the right. I haven't sufficient control of the right hand to draw a thread as fine as I would like to. But even then, the thread is finer than the one I could draw on the Magan wheel. My speed also has somewhat increased, and if my left elbow does not betray me, my speed must increase a good deal. I visualize a tug of war between my speed and the fineness of the yarn.

These days, *Satyagrahashramno Itihas*[1] takes up my time. I do not feel like writing anything else before the history is finished. The study of Urdu and of the currency problem and *Swadhyaya Samhita* are of course going on. I may not, therefore, be tempted to write on the characteristics of *daivi sampat*[2]. The idea is yours and I think it is proper that you yourself should write on the subject.

[1] *Vide* pp. 188-236

[2] Divine heritage; *vide Bhagavad Gita*, xvi. 1-3.

The history of the Ashram is taking a strange shape. I find the task is also difficult. There is in it very little about individuals. I have explained what the Ashram observances are, and how they are being followed. Therein I have written at length on non-violence, varnashrama, bread-labour and *brahmacharya*. Perhaps the work will be finished in a fortnight. I am keeping your suggestions[1] before me. But all your suggestions cannot be incorporated in it. I myself do not know what shape the history will take finally.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original C W 9487. Courtesy D B Kalelkar

253. SUPERVISION IS NOT NECESSARY[2]

July 24, 1932

This heading will probably shock the readers. I do not intend to suggest through it that we can manage our affairs at present without supervision. But I certainly wish to suggest a way of reducing its degree and doing away with it completely by and by.

If supervision is thought necessary in an institution inspired by the ideals of dharma, to that extent it is deficient in dharma. Supervision implies distrust, and distrust kills the spirit of dharma, it kills the soul. God watches everybody. Why should we then watch anyone? Why should a person who has undertaken to cook or to clean lavatories not do the work carefully unless he is watched? Why should we not trust that he will do it carefully? We may not mind [a rule to the effect that] a person who does not do thoroughly the work which he has undertaken should leave the Ashram, but supervision ought to be unbearable to us. The total quantity of work each person does every day is sufficient supervision over him.

We should understand the meaning of supervision here A child does require supervision. It will not know how to do a thing, and should be taught to do the work given to it. Even grown-ups

[1] The addressee had written "The above letter refers to my suggestions which were about what should be included in the history of the Ashram I had particularly requested Gandhiji not to spare any of us whose narrow vision and incompetence gave him so much trouble and who were inadequate to carry on the grand experiment in community life for social reconstruction known as the Satyagraha Ashram "

[2] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 20-7-1932, *vide* pp. 264-6.

who do not know how to do a particular thing will require, may even want, supervision. Really speaking, such supervision is not supervision, but is guidance by a teacher. Novices are able to go forward in their work through the confidence which such guidance gives them.

But the supervision which is a form of watching in order to know whether or not the other person is doing his work properly is blameworthy. Such supervision even over children is a bad thing We should discover some means of doing away with this blameworthy practice.

This is the first step towards that goal. we should make a list of the activities in which supervision is maintained and note the persons who are working in them The matter should be discussed with them and they should then be left to their sense of honour. The manager of the Ashram and all the others should fully realize that God watches everything. Children, too, should realize right from now that God is present everywhere. This is not a superstition or a matter of doubt. It is as much a fact as our own existence is to ourselves.

Everybody should think carefully over this suggestion. It is our moral duty to put it into practice to the utmost extent possible.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U./II

254. *LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE*[1]

July 24, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE,

Since writing to you[2] about my correspondence, Major Bhandari has showed me the Government's letter to you on the subject.

[1] The letter could not be posted the day it was written Regarding this Mahadev Desai has reported· "Bapu prepared a letter to be sent to Doyle about our correspondence But the Superintendent was unnerved and said, 'Please do not send any such letter. It may lead them to suppose that the Indians in charge of this prison had complained to you.' . . [Next day] Bapu assured the Superintendent that it was not open to objection on the ground he feared. The Superintendent proposed, 'Please make it clear that you are not referring to the jail authorities' Bapu pointed out, 'In that case they will assuredly believe that it has been written at your suggestion Instead of that, please let it go in the form in which I have written it As a matter of fact this is an issue on which you ought to resign—if you had any self-respect But we have lost such sense of honour Therefore if you are not able to take any action permit me at least to do this much'" (*Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol I, pp. 324-6)

[2] *Vide* pp 237-8.

I must confess that the letter has come upon me as a shock. It betrays, if I understand it rightly, want of confidence in Indian officials as a class and, naturally therefore, a disregard of the great languages of the country spoken by the millions of its inhabitants. The consequences of the policy are disastrous for those who have to suffer from it. Those who do not know English and cannot afford to pay for English assistance or who are too proud to avail themselves of it are at once put under a disadvantage. My own case is an instance in point. A friend who has visited my ailing son[1] in the Gorakhpur Central Jail tells me that he is anxiously awaiting my letter I did write to him. But he had not got the letter at the time the friend wrote. My son knows English, but we have never written to each other in English. My wife complains of the absence of my letters. She does not know English. I do not know what happens to her letters to me and mine to her. In my humble opinion the principal languages of India are entitled to as much status at least as English, if not a greater.

It hurts me to think that no Indian officials knowing the respective languages are considered fit or trustworthy enough to decide whether letters I write in Gujarati or Hindi or Urdu do or do not come within the passable limits. I have already in my letter of 22nd instant inquired if I have unwittingly given cause for the extraordinary scrutiny of my letters.

The revised orders of the Government therefore by implication seem to take away the liberty they have given me for letter-writing.

Alike therefore for grounds of reason and sentiment, I would invite Government to reconsider their decision and so arrange as to ensure for my correspondence in the vernaculars the same quick despatch they promise for the English, if they whole-heartedly desire that I should continue to write letters as I have done hitherto.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40), Pt I, p 249

[1] Devdas Gandhi

255. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

July 24, 1932

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI,

With reference to your inquiry about letter[1] No. 27 addressed to Chhotubhai in an Ashram packet, I have to state that I cannot trace it among my papers It must have been lost in passing from place to place. The letters are listed after they are collected There is therefore little chance [of] any being left here. The missing letter contained my advice to Chhotubhai about his father who is suffering from obstinate constipation and softness of the brain. I do hope that it will be traced and sent to the Ashram, if found and passed as unobjectionable.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G N 5132

256. LETTER TO KUSUMBEHN DESAI

July 24, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I got your letter. You say that Pyarelal and others keep good health, whereas I had a letter from someone else telling me that Pyarelal's health has gone down. I forget who it was. I should like you to go and see him again. I have had no letter from him at all. I have written to him, but these days it is not smooth sailing with my letters.

Have you been reading anything? Have you kept up your effort to learn English?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati· G N. 1843

[1] Presumably "Letter to Chhotubhai", 17-7-1932; *vide* p 257.

257. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

July 24, 1932

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I hope all of you reached the Ashram in comfort. Qureshi[1] should take care and see that his health, which has been improving, should not decline again. I hope you also have paid a visit to Imam Saheb's grave. Ask Qureshi to write to me about it. If it is considered desirable to put up a wall round the grave, that may be done. Where is Kevalram[2]? How is his health? Ask him to write to me Nirmala[3], it seems, has fallen into a long sleep I have had no letter from her at all recently.

Give me news about Dhiru[4] and Vimala[5]. If you have seen them recently, let me know how their health is.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 5503

258. LETTER TO PURATAN BUCH

July 24, 1932

CHI. PURATAN,

There is not much difference between 'bhai' and 'chi'. I do not remember how 'Bhai' came to be written or why I wrote it. I did not make the change intentionally. I sometimes do think of what the other person would prefer. But in your case I did not even do that. It is true that anybody whom I address as 'Chi'. is loaded with greater burden by me. So long as I am in jail, we need not think whether you can stay with me. If I am released some day you may ask me then. If I settle at some fixed place, I would certainly have you with me My advice was not meant to stop you from asking questions but was intended to induce you to reflect You must learn how to solve corollaries after knowing the principle So long as we cannot do this, it cannot

[1] Gulam Rasool Qureshi, son-in-law of Imam Saheb

[2] Kevalram Bhimji Joshi

[3] Wife of Kevalram

[4] & [5] Addressee's children

be said that we know the principle. This is like solving geometrical problems If we can solve one, we should be able to solve others arising from it. Improve your health and make it very strong.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N 9167

259. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

July 24, 1932

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I got your letter. Sharda writes to me from time to time It is good that she is staying alone. All children in the Ashram must learn to live alone without their parents. Children who are excessively dependent on parents become weak in the end.

Perhaps deep breathing may prove beneficial for your nose trouble. Drawing in water mixed with potassium permanganate into the nose may also help. Did Dr. Rajab Ali examine it? If the bone inside is affected, a doctor's help is necessary. Otherwise deep breathing must help. Please do let me know the effect of the vaid's medicine. If the air there agrees with you both, do not be in a hurry to leave the place. Chhaganlal and Kashi[1] cannot but like your company, and wherever you are you will certainly be working.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S G 14

260. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

July 24, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. I cannot say how long I shall be able to continue writing letters. A sword is hanging over them. If the delay in clearing the letters from here continues, I see no benefit in writing them. Incoming letters are now handed over to me immediately. For outgoing letters, correspondence is going on. If these letters stop, you may assume that the train is off the rails But that need not upset you or make you unhappy. It is for the Government

[1] Wife of Chhaganlal Gandhi

to permit me or not to permit me to write letters. A prisoner cannot demand such permission as a matter of right. The fact that I have been writing so long confers no right on me, and the loss of something over which one had no right should not make one unhappy.

So you have now received my letter[1] conveying my blessings to you on the occasion of your birthday. Why should you mind that you got it late? Perhaps your getting it late has increased its value. You should not have taken it as an ill-omen when you did not get it. It is impossible that I would not send you my blessings though I had your letter asking for them. Why should you take it as an ill-omen if, because of unforeseen circumstances, you do not get the letter or get it late? Really speaking, there is no such thing as ill-omen for a person who has cultivated the spirit of non-attachment. Do not, therefore, believe for a single moment that this will be a bad year for you. It will be bad only if we think bad thoughts or speak or do evil. And it is in our power not to do that.

If it is the doctor's opinion that you should get the tonsils removed, you should do so. Wasn't his opinion the same when you consulted him before? The operation takes very little time. Nor have I heard that there is any risk in it. Your body ought to become completely free from disease. I believe that ultimately one is the best judge in regard to one's body.

Doctors have to depend much on what their patients tell them. This fact itself shows that, if the patient does not know what happens to his body, he cannot give correct replies to the doctor's question. If you merely tell a doctor, "I have a headache", what can he do? The patient should know why he has got a headache. We can see that this is true about many other symptoms. The same argument applies to treatment. A doctor cannot know, if he is not told, what effect a particular medicine had. He has to depend on the patient for that. But all patients are not able to understand the effects of medicines. Food is a daily medicine for the body. What effect a particular food has on a person's body, only he can understand. Hence, one who knows the effects of food, water and air on the human body will be able to preserve his health better than a doctor can ever do for him. I believe, therefore, that all of us should acquire some general knowledge about the body, as also about air, water and food. We do have the necessary literature for this purpose. We need not read all of it. If we read some of it, that would be enough to help us. Shivaji

[1] *Vide* pp. 118-9.

made his body very strong by his own efforts. Regarding myself, I am convinced that if I had not acquired sufficient knowledge for my purpose, I would have marched away long ago. This half-broken body endures through my own care. I am sure that doctors have very little share in keeping it going.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N 10295 Also C W 5749 Courtesy Premabehn Kantak

261. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

July 24, 1932

DEAR PRABHUDAS,

Know (what I have written) about Magan spinning-wheel from letter[1] to Narandas [2] I have nothing to say about truth. It is difficult to define God. The definition of truth is enshrined in everyone's heart. Whatever you believe at present to be true is truth and that is your God. If one lives in accordance with this truth felt in one's heart, one is bound to reach the ultimate and pure truth, and that is *Paramatman*[3]. I am at present reading selections from the Vedas and there the same idea occurs. According to me, so long as we do not learn to live a truthful life, all reading is fruitless. Such a life has no room for anything which is not spontaneous. The votary of truth will appear as he is. There will be unity in his thought, speech and action. We learn this sooner if we regard God as truth. In order to live such a truthful life, we do not need to read many books. Everything depends on us. Reflect over this *mantra*. "The face of truth is covered by a golden lid. O sun, remove that so that I may see the Law of Truth."[4]

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p 322, and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, pp 389-91

[1] *Vide* pp. 264-6.
[2] What follows is from *Mahadevbhaini Diary*.
[3] Supreme Self
[4] *Ishopanishad*, 15

262. LETTER TO PADMA

July 24, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

I have preserved for you and Durga slips of coloured paper. It would be very good of course if the change to another plot agrees with you Your weight must increase If you get better there, then there will be no necessity for you to go to Bhowali I regard it as a great improvement that your constipation has disappeared What fruits can you get there? How much milk can you drink? How do you pass your time? What does Sheela do during the whole day?

I have not received your father's letter mentioned by you.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 6134 Also C W 3486 Courtesy Prabhudas Gandhi

263. LETTER TO KAMALABEHN

July 24, 1932

DEAR KAMALABEHN,

It is good that you have come to the Ashram, now stay (there) quietly. Does the Ashram water agree (with you)? Do you receive any information about Gopaldas? How is his health? Write to me.

I have not received at present any information about Balkrishna's health. Is he still conducting the girls' school?

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 393

264. LETTER TO DR. PRANJIVAN MEHTA

July 24, 1932

BROTHER PRANJIVAN,

I am in receipt of your letter. Polak writes that he is satisfied with Maganlal[1]. His mind is engrossed in study. If that is the case and the same state continues, he will undoubtedly be benefited Of late I have no letter from Maganlal. Ratilal[2] appears to be going on well at present In his case changes—good and bad—will continue to take place.

Though my left elbow was confined in splints, there was no benefit As it gives no trouble as long [as] it is not used in a particular way, I entertain no anxiety about it. The doctor here has been giving the treatment of diathermy at present. It has so far been treated thrice only and so nothing can be said about its effect. I hope you do not look to your shop overexerting yourself.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, pp 405-7

265. LETTER TO KUSUM GANDHI

July 24, 1932

DEAR KUSUM (JUNIOR),

You must be thoughtlessly speaking out too much. My post did not reach there and so you stopped writing, though you have written to me so often that you like to write to me every week. Do not speak anything hastily or thoughtlessly. Do not take a vow before thinking fully (about it). If (once) it is taken, remember it and observe it. Has your fever gone? What amount of milk can you take? If you want to be a nurse recover (from illness) soon and pass (your) life in meditation. By searching for the cause of everything any activity which we

[1] Addressee's son who was studying in England at this time

[2] Addressee's son who was ill

undertake becomes interesting and it does not appear to be burdensome.

BAPU

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No 20-IX

266. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

July 25, 1932

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I certainly felt unhappy that I could not see you. But we have no choice when dharma requires us to act in a particular way. Having stopped receiving visitors, surely I could not make any exception. You should now write to me. Tell me how you keep. Give me news about Kaku, too. Amina[1] also should write to me. I am sure you are quite happy. All three of us are well. It is not certain whether I shall be able to continue to write letters. We must resign ourselves to whatever happens.

I suppose you met Nath[2]. Give me news about him.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–6 G S. Gangabehnne, p. 63 Also C W. 8791. Courtesy. Gangabehn Vaidya

267. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

July 25, 1932

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Received your letter on the 23rd. It would be better if the weather there agrees (with you). Has any companion been given? Are sufficient clothes provided? I had received *Popular Astronomy*. I could not know who sent it. From the name in the book I thought that it must have come from Pranlal. It has so happened that a copy of the book has come to my hands for some months past. Shivaji (brother of Vinoba) of the Ashram has made a deep study (of the subject). I had written to him to send me any book he liked. And so this book came to me. So I have with me two copies at present. It has good maps, but

[1] Amina G Qureshi, younger daughter of Imam Saheb

[2] Kedarnath Kulkarni, guru of Kishorelal Mashruwala

the contents are not of much value. At present I have got with me better books (from the point of view of contents) than this. There can be no observation of the sky in this season. In September or October when the sky clears and the sunset will take place earlier, if you are allowed to remain outside till 7.30 or 8 you can observe the sky.[1]

I see that your views about social reform are very advanced. My attitude in such matters is different. I would not discuss any matter which does not seem to be of immediate importance and about which there is the slightest room for doubt. Divorce is such a matter. For one thing, among the masses divorce is not prohibited, and where it is prohibited many other reforms need to be introduced before we can go as far as divorce. I would not therefore spend my energy in discussing the subject and create confusion in the minds of people.

As regards [artificial] birth-control, my mind revolts against it. It is possible that old ideas unconsciously influence my views, but reasons for which I oppose it [really] exist today and we can, therefore, see for ourselves the great harm done by [artificial] birth-control. By adopting artificial means to prevent conception, even those who are strong today are likely to become weak. The whole attitude to life behind the practice of birth-control is dangerous and mistaken. Its supporters believe that it is not only man's right but also his duty to satisfy his natural sex desire, and that if a man does not discharge this duty his development will be retarded. I see great evil in this view. I observe it daily in experience. It is impossible to expect self-control in those who have recourse to these artificial means. These means are being advocated on the assumption that self-control in this matter is impossible. And to regard the control of the sex urge as impossible or unnecessary or harmful is to my mind a denial of dharma, for self-control is the very basis of dharma. There are many other simple and innocent methods of preventing the birth of weak progeny. Leaving them aside, how can a dangerous method like birth-control be adopted? Almost everybody admits that it is full of dangers. Thus, from whatever point of view I think about it, it seems to me highly undesirable. I am prompted to write all this again because you have still time to think and, since the subject is very serious, it is necessary that you should examine it carefully. I shall have no fear then what con-

[1] This paragraph has been reproduced from the English translation available in Bombay Secret Abstracts.

clusion you come to, for I believe that your truthfulness will save you in the end or that, if I am wrong, you will be able to correct my error. If you are convinced that birth-control is morally right, you will not rest until you have converted me to your view. And I am easy to deal with. However strongly I may cling to a view, I don't hesitate to give it up immediately if I discover my error or if it is pointed out to me by somebody.

All three of us are well. I now take milk, but I do not see any benefit. I have yielded to the pressure of the doctor here. The pain in the elbow persists, but it pains only when it is moved in a certain way, and hence there is no cause for anxiety about it. I have already written to Taramati in regard to visits.[1] Besides making envelopes, Sardar has taken up two other things, viz., spinning and study of Sanskrit. He is pursuing the study with great energy. You have probably seen the 24 books by Satavlekar. Out of these he has finished three in 15 days. This is excellent speed.

Devdas had another relapse, but from the latest information I have received it appears that fever has again come down. He says in his letter that the Gorakhpur Jail authorities looked after him very well. The position about my correspondence has become uncertain now. Incoming post is delivered fairly regularly, but the letters which I write are delayed a good deal before they are despatched. You need not, therefore, worry if you don't get my replies to your letters soon.

Give me detailed information about the food which you get there, whether you can digest it, what exercise you can take, what your weight is and how you sleep. What are you reading at present?

I am progressing well with my Urdu reading. I can now write a little. I am happy about this.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Have you received the Gandiva spinning-wheel? Mahadev reminds me that you wrote to me about having received it. My memory may be said to be failing a little now. Can you spin on it?

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, pp. 112-4, and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 465

[1] *Vide* p. 39.

268. *TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA*

July 26, 1932

PANDIT MALAVIYAJI
HINDU UNIVERSITY
BENARES

THANKS FOR LOOKING AFTER MIRABAI AND DEVDAS. MIRABAI'S FEVER CAUSES ANXIETY. PLEASE WIRE HER CONDITION.

GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 371

269. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

July 26, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

Your postcards are a great relief. I cannot understand why fever persists. I hope you have been using the mosquito-net regularly. The incoming letters are again being received in good time. There is much delay about outgoing letters. I am still in correspondence with the Government. You will not worry if you don't hear from me or hear late.

Love.

BAPU

SMT. MIRABAI
SEVA UPAVAN
NAGWA, BENARES

From the original: C.W. 6229. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9695

270. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

July 26, 1932

Your touching letter of 23rd instant came into my hand today. Papa's letter I have not received yet. My correspondence is being overhandled by the authorities. There is therefore much delay and uncertainty about it. The incoming letters are delivered in good time.

I loathe to argue about death in the face of the tragedy that has overtaken you.[1] You will say with Job, "miserable comforter"[2]. But I do feel that if we would know God, we have got to learn to rejoice in death. When Narasinha Mehta the first poet-devotee of Gujarat lost his son, he is said to have joyed over it and exclaimed: "It is well that this burden is lifted. Now I shall meet God soon." This is an unhappy rendering of a beautiful musical verse. May you see greater light out of this darkness. I know that you stand in no need of any comfort from any of us and that it has to come from within. This is merely an evidence of what all of us three are feeling about you.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 329

271. LETTER TO MAGANLAL P. MEHTA

July 26, 1932

DEAR MAGANLAL,

I expect a letter from you every week, but I am disappointed. Mr. Polak has informed me that you are getting on all right and that you are engrossed in your studies. I receive letters from Manjula[3].

Write to me in detail. Let me know what subjects you are studying.

[1] The addressee had written· "Death is a dear friend, quite true, and not a frightful enemy as men suppose But then, we all fight so vigorously against him on his approach, and employ all the knowledge of the ancient and the modern science to drive the friend away that the truth is quite forgotten just when we ought to remember it most . . . It is not grief, but darkness that is around I am still praying for light."

[2] *The Book of Job*, xvi. 2

[3] Addressee's wife

Develop your body well.

Hope you are writing to the Doctor regularly.

Yours,
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 455

272. LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK

July 26, 1932

MY DEAR HENRY,

I see you want your pound of flesh I had thought that your partnership with Millie would improve you. But it is the old story of the leopard repeated a millionth time. Having seen one good thing in you, you want me to see many more. I must decline the invitation with thanks. For if I accepted it, the result would be that my other companions would grow jealous and forsake me.

Devdas was always nervous when Maud drove her car. She is always high-strung and often absent-minded. She ought to give up driving the car herself. Please pass this on to her.

I am writing to Leon.[1] His letter came into my hands before yours. Let us all hope that he and Marie will have many years of happiness.

I am glad Maganlal is shaping so well. Please give him the enclosed.[2]

Love to you all. Mahadev joins.

Yours,
BHAI

H. S. L. POLAK, ESQ.
5TH FLOOR, DAVES INN HOUSE
265 STRAND, LONDON, W.C. 2

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 453

[1] *Vide* the following item.
[2] *Vide* the preceeding item.

273. LETTER TO LEON POLAK

July 26, 1932

MY DEAR LEON,

I am glad you wrote to me about your engagement to Marie Lindrum. May you both have many many years of happiness and service.

My love to you both.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 453

274. LETTER TO SHIRINBAI[1]

July 26, 1932

MY DEAR SISTER,

I received your disconsolate letter only today It had to pass through so many hands before coming to me. My whole heart goes out to you and your aged mother. God suffers us to blame Him, to swear at Him and deny Him. We do it all in our ignorance. A very beautiful Sanskrit verse which we recite daily at the morning prayer means· "Miseries are not miseries, nor is happiness truly happiness. True misery consists in forgetting God, true happiness consists in thinking of Him as ever enthroned in our hearts." And has not an English poet said: "Things are not what they seem?" The fact is if we knew all the laws of God we should be able to account for the unaccountable. Why should we think that the withdrawal of your brother from our midst is an affliction? We simply do not know. But we do, or ought to know that God is wholly good and wholly just. Even our illnesses such as your other brother's may be no misfortune. Life is a state

[1] *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol I, p 254, has "There was a heart-rending letter from Shirinbai, the sister of the missing airman His 72-year-old mother was still alive; and his only brother had been in a London nursing home for 8 years. The sister had picked up a little Gujarati 30 years ago, but still she took great pains and wrote a good Gujarati letter and at the end of it requested permission to write to Bap in English"

of discipline. We are required to go through the fire of suffering. I do so wish that you and your mother could really rejoice in your suffering. May you have peace.

Please forget all about the honey[1] and write to me in English by all means.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p. 326

275. LETTER TO A. SUBBIAH

July 26, 1932

I can understand your grief and hers over the loss of your child[2] of whom Lalita[3] used to write to me in such loving terms. But you have lived long enough in the Ashram to realize, especially on such occasions, that God has the right to take away from us what He gives us You know what we believe. Our belief is that every one of us comes to this world as a debtor and we leave when the debt is for the time being discharged The child has paid the debt and is free. You and Lalita and all the rest of us have still to discharge our obligations.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp 329-30

276. LETTER TO LALITA

July 26, 1932

DAUGHTER LALITA,

From Subbiah's letter I have learnt of your grief and Subbiah writes that you have been weeping much. But you should know that religion forbids weeping. The God who gave the daughter has the right to take her away. And in the end we all are to go there. What grief can there be for that! So forget the grief and plunge yourself in service (of others). Certainly write to me. May God give you peace.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 491

[1] The addressee had sent a honeycomb and offered to write about i in detail

[2] The addressee had lost his daughter on the very day he was released from jail.

[3] Addressee's wife

277. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI

July 26, 1932

BHAISHRI NAJUKLAL,

You have written to me after keeping me waiting for a long time. I received your letter after eighteen days, but that is not your fault. Do you go to bed with an empty stomach? It is a universal experience that a person who eats late at night does not get sleep immediately on retiring. If, therefore, you do not take your meals before sunset, form that habit. And if you cannot concentrate on Ramanama, go on repeating any Sanskrit stanza or *bhajan* which you like, and you will most probably get sleep. I assume that in other respects, your health is good. Prabodh[1] must have become quite big now. All three of us are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati S N. 12150

278. LETTER TO HAMIDA TYABJI

July 26, 1932

DEAR HAMIDA,

Received your letter written in good handwriting. Abbaji has also been informed that you have improved in health. You did well in informing me about the death of Rohini's maternal uncle. Later on Rohini's letter was received. Though I have written to her a letter[2] of condolence I now do not like to express condolence for the death (of someone). Why run away from death? God has given us many boons and death seems to be one of the greatest of them. It is not a calamity. We should learn to regard it as a friend. That which is for every living being, how can we regard as a calamity? By so looking upon it, we become offenders before God.

[1] Addressee's eldest son
[2] *Vide* p 273.

Like Raihana if you write letters to me both in Gujarati and Urdu you also will be an expert like her. You must write in Gujarati so that you may acquire the habit. I wish that your knowledge of Gujarati may increase.

It is good that you have developed so much friendship with Rohini's family. There is no doubt that the family is good and honest. But the certificate that you will give will be a true one I am not much in touch with it. My salaams to all there.

Many blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 471

279. LETTER TO TARAMATI M. TRIKUMJI

July 26, 1932

MY DEAR TARAMATI,

I have received a letter from Mathuradas from Belgaum in which he writes that, unless he sends for you, you should not go to Belgaum. Mathuradas's health is good till now. I have received the book on astronomy. Hope you and Dilip are well. There is no letter from you now.

Yours,
BAPU

SMT. TARAMATI MATHURADAS
21 MINT ROAD, FORT
BOMBAY

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 447

280. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

July 26, 1932

MY DEAR DEVDAS,

Hanumanprasadji sends me regularly news about you, therefore I am relieved of anxiety. I have already written a letter[1] to you, but nowadays my outgoing letters go first to the Secretariat and are then despatched after scrutiny. And if they are written in

[1] *Vide* p. 268.

Gujarati, they take lot of time and hence you do not receive them earlier. Therefore do not worry yourself if you do not hear from me or receive my letters late. Such are the conditions of prison life. I am however in correspondence with the Government. How is it that you have fallen ill again?

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

DEVDAS GANDHI
PRISONER
DISTRICT JAIL
GORAKHPUR, U.P.

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 451

281. LETTER TO RAMNIKLAL V. SHAH

July 26, 1932

DEAR RAMNIKLAL,

I have received your letter. I do not know your elders, therefore, I dare not write to them. You can show (them) this letter. It is our religion[1] to touch or to dine with those whom we erroneously call untouchables or of low caste. Not to touch them is a sin. I have not the slightest doubt about this. This is not a reform which has come from the West, but it is the duty of the Hindus.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

RAMNIKLAL VIMBASHI SHAH
CHINTAMANI BUILDING
2ND BHOIWADA, BOMBAY 2

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 451

[1] Presumably the original had "dharma".

282. *LETTER TO A GIRL*[1]

July 26, 1932

DEAR . . .,

I do not remember having seen you any time. It is possible that I might have seen you many years ago when I was out to beg. Although I have no direct acquaintance with you, yet, as I have connections with your father and . . ., allow me to exercise some authority as an elder. But do not consider this my letter as coming from an elder. I wish to be your friend. I have known about the misdeed committed by . . . . I am pained on account of that misdeed because . . . has been brought up in the Ashram. Hence I have to apologize to you for his misdeed. You can accept my apology only when you entirely forget . . . from your mind, and you may not henceforth be caught in the snare of any youth.

I believe that boys and girls, when they attain the age of discretion, are freed from the control of their parents. Parents may guide them as friends. (But) they cannot put pressure upon them. You have not attained the age to enjoy this freedom You may not be knowing that I have guided many girls like you, and that from among them those who have followed my advice have become happy. In this world there is no vice (lit. dross) like untruth. He who conceals that which is not to be concealed acts untruthfully. If you believed that parents should not exercise their authority over you, but that they should guide you, then why should you write a secret note to . . . or anybody? If you fall in love with anybody, you have a right to do so. But many boys and girls nourish their secret passions only in the name of affection. If they take a vow not to conceal anything from their parents and act accordingly, they cannot but be saved from such calamities

Your present time is for study only. You have been fortunate to have parents of broad views, and hence they are affording you facilities for study. So long as you desire to avail yourself of this facility, you must lead the life of a celibate. But it is possible that this may be beyond your power. If it is so, you must consult your parents with a pure mind. There is not the slightest need to feel hesitation in it. If you do this much and if you give me a promise (not to do such a thing again), then only I will know that there

[1] The names have been omitted in this and the following letter.

has not remained in the least upon you the effect of the misdeed committed by . . . . Give an answer to this letter if you get it. May God protect you.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 487

283. A LETTER

[*July 26, 1932*][1]

I have received today your letter dated the 8th instant At present my post has become irregular. For some days I get my incoming post regularly. The outgoing post is still irregular. I do not know when you will receive this.

You did well in writing about . . . I had hoped that . . . would have improved. But after reading your description, I stick to the adjective I used. The steps you had taken about . . . were certainly appropriate. I think that he ought to have been brought to his senses in still more plain terms. There is nothing to be thought about him at present.

You must have deeply thought about . . . . I see from the account given by you that her mind is still not purified. I have taken courage to write a letter[2] to . . . . Give it to her if you think it proper to do so. From this letter you will also come to know my views about children. I am grieved at this calamity which has fallen upon you, husband and wife, on account of . . . . The responsibility for the faults (still) lurking in . . . rests as much on . . . as on the Ashram As (the atmosphere) of purity cannot be made to pervade the Ashram, the children as well as the grown-up (inmates) do not become free from faults. It is my firm belief that where perfect sanctity prevails, an unholy person must leave off his impurities so long as he stays in this atmosphere. So much also has not been imparted in the Ashram. It is only because of this that instances like that of . . . are to be found

I understand that there cannot be any change in your attitude towards . . . . is exceedingly straightforward and outspoken. He has suffered much on . . . account. When he hears this, he will feel intense pain.

I have returned the telescope in the beginning of this month. I was not permitted to keep it for more than a month's time. Hence,

[1] &.[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

your suggestion was late. We could make very little use of it. We could see Jupiter very well. But we could not get any information regarding the stars with the help of the telescope. We could not see the beauty of Parijata about which we had read. I will carry out your suggestions, when any other telescope comes to hand. At present the clouds do not allow us to have a sight of the sky.

I have got the Sanskrit dictionary. I am reading Kharas's book at present. I like his style. I feel that if anybody makes a beginning with this book, he would find it difficult It is, as it were, written not for those who have absolutely no knowledge of astronomy. But I have gone through other books and hence I feel no difficulty in understanding this (book). I hope to hear from your mouth about your invention some time. In the mean time, please do write to me if there is anything worth writing.

Blessings from
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p. 483

284. *LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI*

July 26, 1932

DAUGHTER RAIHANA,

I have had no news from you this week. I hope you are quite well I received a very sweet letter from Father. I was very glad to learn that the affairs of his company have been cleared up. I hope his pain has disappeared now. It is too early for him yet to get old. I hope to see him dancing. I had a letter from Hamida too. At present I am reading an Urdu book entitled *Ramacharcha* It is beautifully printed and its Urdu is easy to follow. After finishing it, I intend to read the *Sirat*[1]. I shall finish *Ramacharcha* in a day or two. We are having good rains here. Convey our respects and *vandemataram* to Father and Mother, and bhrrr from me to Father. All of you will be pleased to learn that Sardar is learning Sanskrit and is making very good progress.

To Raihana,

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu. S N. 9645

[1] *Sirat-un-Nabi*; *vide* entry under date July 28, 1932, in "Diary, 1932" appearing at the end of this volume.

285. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

July 27, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

It is a great consolation to me that you are giving me a daily report of your health. This sudden overtaking of weakness after every illness shows that your system has not much staying power. But there is, I am afraid, no remedy for it. In a previous letter I asked you, if you could, to see Devdas.[1] It is not to be thought of now. You need a long rest from work both mental and physical. Remember me to Babu Sivaprasad and his people.

Love.

BAPU

SMT. MIRABAI
SEVA UPVAN, NAGWA
BENARES

From the original C.W. 6230. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9696

286. LETTER TO RUKMINIDEVI BAZAJ

July 27, 1932

CHI. RUKMINI[2],

I got a letter from you after many days. I did not know that you were having fever. Naturally in that condition you cannot write. And if you cannot write, why should Benarsi[3] write? It seems that you have lost the strength you had gained at Deolali. You should regain it. I hope the child is thriving. It was a good thing that all of you went to see Devdas.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

SHRIMATI RUKMINI
C/o SJT. BENARSIDAS
PANCH GANGA, BENARES CITY, U.P.

From Gujarati. C.W. 9451. Courtesy: Benarsilal Bazaj

[1] *Vide* p. 268.
[2] Daughter of Maganlal Gandhi
[3] Addressee's husband

287. A LETTER[1]

July 27, 1932

DEAR . . .,

You have become emaciated. But I can understand your misery. I have already told you that in your company your life and that of . . .[2] have been spoiled.[3] If you really feel no passion, you cannot satisfy . . . although you submit to him. This is the experience of all men who seek pleasure. The result is that in spite of having intercourse with you . . . remains unsatisfied, and that increases his passion. If, therefore, you two want to live together, you must take pleasure in intercourse with him. If you cannot do so, you should live separately. I see nothing but harm in your living together in your present condition. You deceive each other, you deceive yourselves and also deceive the world. All people except me seem to believe about you that, because you live in the Ashram, you live as ascetics. The best course is that both of you should come out of this untruthful life and that both of you should marry according to your wish. According to me, both of you live an immoral life just now. If . . . marries another woman, I would regard his life afterwards to be blameless because it will be natural and in the end his passion will calm down To make this change in your life, you should have a frank talk with each other and then firmly take whatever step seems proper to you both. If this is done, . . . will one day become free from passion. If you go on as at present, he will continue to feel dissatisfied and his passion will become stronger and stronger. Do not lose the strength which you possess. Do not yield to despair. May God help you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp. 331-2, and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. 11, p. 509

[1] The names in this and the following letter have been omitted.
[2] Addressee's husband
[3] What follows is from *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I.

288. A LETTER

July 27, 1932

DEAR . . ,

Received your letter. I have carefully read your note. Your duty towards . . . appears clear to me. If she is devoid of passion you should live separately from her. If . . . does not desire it I would not regard her as being devoid of passion, that is, she ought to satisfy your passion. As you cannot suppress your passion you ought to form another marriage. Marry a suitable woman if you can get one there. It would be better if she is a widow, and then satisfy your passion.[1] You will then become free in the course of time from your sexual craving. Today this seems to be almost impossible for you. The cause of your anger also is your sexual craving. Your palate is very strong, which is not surprising; for anger, sexual passion and craving of the palate go together. You believe that you are completely devoted to your work. But I doubt if that is so. I do not mean to say that you are indifferent. But anybody who is wholly devoted to his work can never be a slave of his passion. How can he find the time for that? But you are certainly not so. It can be seen that you try to become devoted to your work, but then you also try to overcome your sexual passion. As you have not succeeded in the second aim, so you have not succeeded in the first either. You seem to be a prey to lustful thoughts even when you are working. Was not that my condition too? Other people saw no sign of negligence in my work, but I myself could see such signs. That is why I resolved to observe *brahmacharya*.[2] Read my previous letter and this to . . . . I wish that anyhow you both should be relieved of this misery. May God be kind to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 331, and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 507

[1] What follows is from *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I.

[2] What follows is from the English translation available in Bombay Secret Abstracts.

289. LETTER TO RADHA GANDHI

July 27, 1932

I have received your letter after many days. My post has now become irregular. Don't be surprised[1] if it stops entirely. I am trying to settle this matter. I hope rain has no bad effect upon your health. I have received a letter from Santok today in which she says that she is going to Kashi. I have also received a letter from Rukhi. She is now all right. She has seen Devdas. Devdas was not keeping good health, but he is well now. Tell Premkuvar that I do not remember to have received a letter from her. If I received it, I would have written to her in reply.

Yours,
BAPU

RADHABEHN GANDHI
BLOCK A, BHATIA SANATORIUM, DEOLALI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 497

290. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

July 27, 1932

You are getting worried about not receiving any letter from me, but I have already written three. One I sent to the Ashram address. This is the fifth letter I am now writing to you. We must realize that we are both prisoners. What would we have done if there was no permission to write to each other? To worry about such things is useless. I am quite well. I am now taking milk, bread and vegetables. Vallabhbhai and Mahadev are also all right I understand that you are feeling weak. I have not received any letter from you. Write to me in detail.

Yours,
BAPU

MRS. KASTURBAI GANDHI
PRISONER
CENTRAL PRISON, SABARMATI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p. 499

[1] The source has "Don't take it as a wonder".

291. TELEGRAM TO G. S. BAJPAI

July 28, 1932

G. S. BAJPAI
DUNDALION
SIMLA

OUR SINCERE CONDOLENCES ON YOUR BEREAVEMENT.

GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. II, p 377

292. LETTER TO DR. MOHAMMAD ALAM

July 30, 1932

DEAR DR. ALAM,

I was concerned to read in the papers that you were ill and had to be removed to a hospital. Do please let me know exactly what the matter is with [you[1]]. Sardar and Mahadev Desai join me in the wish that there is nothing serious the matter with you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat. G.N 24

293. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

July 30, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. There seems to be no limit to your foolishness. When you get angry, you lose all sense. In the very letter in which you write about having taken a vow to overcome anger, you get angry and that too without reason. You did not understand the reason for my gentle rebuke. I had complained that there was no beauty or art in the slips with zigzag edges which

[1] The source has "is", which is evidently a slip

you had pasted on the envelope.[1] I would not find fault with anyone for spending time on art. But in this case there was no art at all. What art can there be in pasting slips on an envelope? And, moreover, you had pasted them so carelessly that they had half come off. Your anger, therefore, was without reason. It only amused me. If I were with you, I would have slapped you. But your having erred is a more serious matter. You spent so much time on the thing. You entered into unnecessary argument about it and harmed your health, for scientists have discovered by experiments that anger has a very bad effect on health. Our people have always held that belief. Besides, you violated your vow. Don't get angry like this again. My criticism, moreover, was gentle and you did not show even sense enough to understand it.

About letters, follow the example of the child who eats up the carrot when he finds that he cannot blow with it as with a pipe. That is, you should not feel unhappy if the letters stop In any case, you should go on writing from your end. If I decide to stop writing, I will let you know. Even if I cannot write to you to tell you about that, your writing to me will not be a waste of effort.

Greet the new flowers on my behalf. Try to cheer them by telling them that I hope to sleep in their midst one day.

You are very difficult to persuade. If you grow tomatoes and some *bhajis* round the flower plants, you will get them all the year round and your health will benefit. If the body is not yours, but is a trust given to you by God, you should certainly give some time for keeping it fit. Growing tomatoes and *bhajis* does not require much time. They don't cover up much plot either. An English friend of mine who lived with me in South Africa used to grow, in a few days and with little trouble, a *bhaji* named cress which is eaten uncooked.

I have already written to you in regard to the bad health of the girls. Inquire into the matter carefully and find out the facts I was certainly afraid that it was so about Rambhau. Since he has told you everything, try and win him over.

If your weight has gone down, you must eat fruit. Don't mind a little additional expense. What is the good of trying to save money and injuring your health? What is true about food is also true about rest. You must make it a rule to take some rest in the afternoon. It is not for me to show how you can spare time for that. If you are determined to find it, you will succeed.

[1] *Vide* p. 155.

Now about your questions:

(1) Instead of worshipping an individual, one should worship virtues. An individual may turn out to be unworthy of our worship, and in any case he is bound to die. Virtues, on the other hand, never perish.

(2) If you do not like most of those who run the Ashram, this is a golden opportunity to learn to tolerate their defects. No human being is without defects. If we wish to regard others as our own selves, we should have no likes and dislikes.

(3) If you accept the principles on which the Ashram is founded, differences of opinion regarding its outward form should not matter. We should be concerned with the principle of a thing and not with its form.

(4) It is your duty to remain in the Ashram so that you may overcome the defects of your temper.

(5) If you cannot realize your ideals in the Ashram, the fault is yours. Everyone enjoys perfect freedom in the Ashram.

(6) Why should the attraction of those whom you love force you to leave the Ashram? Their love should draw them to the Ashram whenever they feel the need to see you. Love never requires the physical presence of the person loved. Love which requires such presence must be momentary attraction. The purity of one's love is tested by separation from the loved one after his or her death. But all this is mere intellectual exercise. You will live only where your heart is. What can I do or you either, if your heart cannot accept the Ashram?

The yarn spun by me ought to be converted into saris. It belongs to a time before I expressed my views about yarn.[1] It was in fact earmarked for Ba. Hence it is for her to renounce her claim over it. I cannot say that it is not for her. She will never be able to wear very coarse saris. Even the saris, therefore, supplied to her by the Ashram will usually be fine. For that reason, too, she may wear saris made from the yarn spun by me. But we should be very strict about the yarn spun in future, though even with regard to that I will not exercise compulsion on Ba. I certainly wish that she should, of her own free will, refuse to use it and be content with whatever she gets as her share. But this is about the future. As yet all the yarn spun by me recently is here. In any case, my yarn should not lie unused. In fact no one's yarn

[1] Gandhiji had said that those who took part in the spinning *yajna* should not keep back the yarn for their own use, *vide* p 8. The addressee had argued that the yarn spun by Gandhiji should be kept for Kasturba's use.

should lie unused. As soon as a person has spun enough quantity of yarn to be used for weaving, it should be processed for the purpose.

You know about Dhurandhar. If none else, Lilavati, I believe, spins. What you say, however, is correct. Most women will prefer embroidery to spinning. What is true about eating is also true about work. The mind will run after *bhajiyan*[1] in preference to *rotli*. There is self-control and renunciation in continuing to eat *rotli*, whereas it is self-indulgence to start eating *bhajiyan*. Similarly, there is self-control in keeping to spinning and self-indulgence (relatively) in taking up other work.

Your comments on my advice "Judge not lest ye be judged"[2] are unworthy of you. You have not understood the meaning of the statement at all. There is much pride behind your comments. "Lest ye be judged" means that we should not do anything for which we should be judged by others. We should not be insolent towards the world Why should we say, "Let the world say or do what it will"? We should be humble before the world, that is, even when we follow the right path we should not use violence against it or sit in judgment over it. On the contrary, we should endure its punishment and its condemnation. This is humility or non-violence. I should not like you to write what you did, though you probably wrote it sarcastically or in anger. I don't mind your being angry with me. I can laugh it away. But this other remark rankles in my mind. You should never be prompted to pen such a remark, that is, you should not even have such a thought. Since you had it, I don't mind your expressing it to me. It is because you expressed it that I am able to explain to you how it is wrong. I have not written this paragraph so that you may keep back your thoughts from me. I wish to see you as you are, whether foolish or insolent or humble. But what I ask of you is that you should not even let such a thought enter your mind.

If the girls cannot massage with sufficient pressure, you should teach them how to do so. That requires not physical strength but skill.

Now about what you have been reading. The belief which you refer to was held once. It is no longer held now. People

[1] Fried delicacy

[2] *Vide* p 155 Commenting on it the addressee had said "I would only be a coward if I hesitated to criticize others lest they should criticize me. Why should I be afraid of the world and refrain from telling people what I regard as truth, since I do not care?"

have not understood some of Malthus's theories, and some others are faulty. The law which applies to lower animals does not apply to man. Lower animals live on one another. Man strives to grow out of that condition. It is the spirit of non-violence which prompts him to do so. So long as one's body endures, one cannot realize perfect non-violence. If, however, a person cherishes the ideal of non-violence, he will live so as to commit the minimum violence. Man's excellence lies in his readiness to let others live and lay down his own life. As he progresses, his food also changes for the better. He has capacity to grow still further. There have been many more discoveries after Darwin's. The book which you have been reading seems to be an old one. Whether it is old or new, the principle of "the greatest good of the greatest number" or "survival of the fittest" is false.

Non-violence aims at the good of all. The divine law cannot be any other but the good of all. It is our duty to discover how to bring that about and what man's duty is under such a law, and not to oppose that law by another. But this is a vast subject. I have dealt with a few points in brief. If you want me to discuss the subject further, put me some questions.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 10296 Also C.W. 5751 Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

294. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

July 30, 1932

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter of the 22nd instant. I have gone through all the books on economics available with me But that does not mean that I have quite understood them Still my understanding has been enriched to some extent. I had expected to receive some more books from you before I had finished reading the last of these. But you did not receive that letter[1] of mine. Now this one is yet another letter gone astray. I want the reports of the Fowler Committee, Chamberlain Committee, Babington Smith and Hilton Young Committee along with the dissenting reports, Dadachanji's book on currency or exchange and the one recently written by Findlay Shirras.

[1] Presumably of June 28, 1932, *vide* p 108.

I am a bit afraid that almonds will not suit you. I can digest almonds, ground-nuts and such oily nuts as I have subsisted on them for years. For you milk and curds are the main food, very little of starch and of the dal proteins none. I have found by experience that wheat, milk, curds, salads and non-starchy fruits like grape, pomegranate, orange, apple, pineapple and *papaya*, these form the necessary and suitable diet for people like you. Almonds can supplant milk only when a vegetable is found equivalent to milk. Chemical tests prove that almonds and milk have common properties excepting a certain specific property which is found in milk but not in almonds and which is present in animal proteins only. I have full faith that among millions of vegetables there must be one possessing that specific property but our vaidyas have done no research in this matter owing to sheer lethargy. Hence almonds are not as useful to us as milk.

The condition of my arm is the same as before but it does not interfere with my work. Therefore there is absolutely no cause for anxiety.

All three of us are well. You will be glad to know that Sardar has started learning Sanskrit and he is making very rapid progress.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi C.W. 7902 Courtesy G D Birla

295. LEARN THE "GITA" BY HEART[1]

July 31, 1932

I have often written and spoken advising people to learn the *Gita* by heart Since I myself have not been able to do that, it does not become me to advise people that they should But I do not feel ashamed of doing so time and again, because I know the benefits of the practice. I am able to face my problems somehow, because I knew once as many as thirteen chapters by heart and have been meditating on the teachings of the *Gita* for the past many years. It may be said, therefore, that I have lived my life under its protecting shade However, if I had been able to learn the whole *Gita* by heart and had studied it with greater care, I would

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 28/31-7-1932, *vide* the following item.

probably have gained much more than I have. But what happened or may happen to me does not matter. My life, it may be said, is over, though I would, if I got an opportunity, try once again to learn it by heart.

Here the word *Gita* should be understood in a wider sense. It means the book or work which is our spiritual authority. Since for most of us it is the *Gita*, I have used that name. But Amtul, Amina and Qureshi should learn by heart the whole or a part of the Koran-e-Sharif instead of the *Gita*. Those who do not know any Sanskrit and cannot learn it now may memorize a Gujarati or a Hindi translation Anybody whose faith is not in the *Gita* but in some other holy book may memorize that.

We should also know what is meant by "memorizing". We should sincerely attempt to live according to the teaching of the book which we learn by heart. That teaching should not be in conflict with certain fundamental principles and we should have understood its meaning fully.

This practice has its reward. If at any time we do not have the book with us or our copy is stolen or burnt, if we are stranded in a strange place or lose our eye-sight or power of speech while our mind is clear—we can imagine other similar circumstances —if in such circumstances we know our beloved book by heart, it can give us great peace of mind, show us the right path and act as our friend in our misfortune.

This is also the experience of the whole world. Our forefathers—whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Parsi—used to memorize certain portions of holy books. Many do that even to-day. We should not disregard the precious experience of all these people. In some measure this is a test of our faith.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U /II

296. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

July 28/31, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got today your letter of 25th/26th. We ought to thank God that you still get my letters. But we should thank Him even when you do not receive them This will mean that we shall have learnt to be equal towards cold and heat, good and bad, happiness and suffering. If we have truly handed over to Him the direction of our lives, we should dance as He wills. We may be happy if He sends us a letter, and should be happy, too, when He sends none. Narasinh Mehta danced and sang with relief. "It is a blessing that the net is cut." That certainly did not mean that his wife was not dear to him or that her presence did not make him happy. She was of course dear to him However, when she died he felt that there was divine providence in that, even that it was God's kindness. Hence, as long as you continue to get my letters let them give you what pleasure they can But rest content when they stop. You will discover that there is joy even in that contentment.

I got the postcard which you wrote on getting the previous packet of letters. The condition of the elbow has remained the same. The weight had risen to 105½ pounds, but it has again gone down to 104. Such minor changes are bound to be there from time to time, but otherwise my health is quite good.

As a principle it is correct that Padma ought not to have incurred a debt. But circumstances may change and a principle may no longer remain applicable. To do her justice, therefore, we should take into account the total figure and, if you feel that the expense was justified, you should pay the debt. We can imagine circumstances in which one has no choice but to incur a debt. It may even be one's duty to do that. All such principles have to be relaxed when circumstances change. Only then can we do justice in every case. If we do not act in this manner, we would be merely clinging to the letter of a rule. About Titus, do what you think best.

It is a great achievement on Keshu's part to have spun yarn of up to 200 counts. How many rounds of such quality did he spin? If you send samples of every quality of such yarn—strings of five

or seven threads each tied to your letter—we shall get them safe and be able to see the yarn. Also send, with somebody who may be coming to this side, a few slivers from among those with which he could spin such fine yarn. If he can spin more such yarn, you should also be ready to get cloth woven from it. On which type of spinning-wheel did he spin yarn of 200 counts, and what was the spindle like?

I have already written to you that at present I spin on the Gandiva wheel.[1] After making some improvements in its spindle-bearer, I can easily spin on it yarn of 30 counts. Today I probably spun yarn of still higher count. The waste, moreover, is negligible. The improvements are these: There is just enough space in the spindle-bearer to fit the spindle; the spindle-bearer is made very narrow; the spindle fits so closely that there is no room for the pulley to move loosely, since there is just enough space for the spindle to rotate freely. These improvements have reduced to a minimum the accidents which resulted in the snapping of the threads, and enable us to draw very fine threads without fear. I have to see whether, by making the spindle still thinner, I can spin fine yarn with greater ease.

I get news about Mirabehn quite regularly here. The latest news I had, at the time of writing this letter, was of 23rd. She was bed-ridden then, though the postcard was written in her own hand. She has become very weak.

I understand what you say about the changes in the prayers. The important thing is that nobody should look upon the prayers as an infliction. As a healthy man feels the pangs of hunger in his stomach if he has not eaten anything on some day, so also a person with a healthy soul cannot but feel uneasy if he has not prayed during a day.

Do what you think proper regarding Prabhudas.

I suppose Shankarbhai's arm is no longer in plaster.

I don't like to tell Premabehn to make her letters shorter. I ought to let her pour out her heart. I know that she must be giving a good deal of her time to these letters, but probably she feels satisfied after writing them.

I will write to Mathew. Read that letter. The inmates of the Ashram will be able to put into practice my suggestion regarding education[2] only to the extent that you have been able to understand the idea and can carry it out. It is something which

[1] *Vide* p. 264

[2] *Vide* pp 182-3.

I cannot easily make clear by explaining in words. It is only by putting it into practice that one can show how easy study and learning can be if we master that key, and how the thing can be done without much ostentation.

July 31, 1932

About Narmada, I wrote to you in my letter dated 31[1]-7-1932. I don't suppose you could have got it in due time. I need not write anything more in this I had one more letter from Shambhushankar. I am sure that, if anything was possible, you must have done it. I bless her and pray that her honour may remain inviolate.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M M U /I. Also C W 8241 Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

297. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

July 31, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

You are remarkable. In spite of your extreme weakness, your hand is just as steady and clear as ever. Malaviyaji, to whom I had wired[2], says he is going to detain you till you have regained your strength. And if the climate agrees with you, nothing can be better than that you should be under Sivaprasad Babu's hospitable roof and Malaviyaji's loving care. I should be entirely free from anxiety. So you have been having the *tulsi*[3] leaf 'tea'.[4] I have never taken it myself. I have heard of its many virtues. In my opinion, the hot water is the chief agent. But I must not discount the testimony of many physicians and patients. What I want is to see you restored to your original strength and that without the harmful quinine. The *tulsi* leaf is certainly harmless, and it has a delicate, pleasing fragrance.

Please give our love to all the friends there.

Love.

BAPU

[1] Evidently a slip for 16, *vide* p 242

[2] On July 26, 1932, *vide* p 291

[3] An aromatic plant

[4] "Shivaprasad Babu's old servant prepared me a special concoction of *tulsi* leaves, one or two *parijat* leaves, black pepper, and *mishri*, which induced perspiration and relieved the fever" —Mirabehn

[PS.]

I hope you had my previous letters. The Government has allowed them to be posted to you. There was delay, but latterly the letters have been fairly promptly released for despatch.

BAPU

From the original. C W. 6232. Courtesy. Mirabehn Also G N 9668

298. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR

July 31, 1932

CHI. RAMESHWARDAS,

I got your two letters. It is good that you left Ram[1] to take care of Vinoba. This is not separation but union. Do not remove him from there If Gangadevi wants to learn English, she should certainly be permitted to do so. A husband has no right to hinder his wife's progress.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 183

299. LETTER TO AMINA G. QURESHI

July 31, 1932

CHI. AMINA,

I expect to get a long letter from you by and by. How is your health? How is your study of Urdu? Write a few sentences if you can. How do you find the children? How did everybody behave towards you?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N 6661

[1] Addressee's son

300. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

July 31, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

Since Tai has come to stay with you, it is our duty to see that she improves her health while she is there. Discover the art of building up good health. Ask Tai to write to me. She may write in Marathi.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 241. Courtesy Lakshmibehn N Khare

301. LETTER TO NIRMALA H. DESAI

July 31, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA (AUNT),

Please let me know whether or not you like being called aunt. Aren't you Babla's[1] aunt? Need you use a different kind of paper for every letter? Using sheets torn from exercise books costs more and, moreover, spoils the exercise books. Again, when the sheet is [torn off], the vertical line ruled on the left side . . .[2]. A thing is well used only when it is used chiefly for the purpose for which it is meant. It is not necessary that you should ask some questions in every letter. You can give in a letter a fine summary of what you read [and understood] during the week.

Nobody, whether a woman or a man, needs a physical weapon to protect herself or himself. Sometimes such weapon is used against that person himself. Moreover, a woman who [believes in] ahimsa will protect herself by killing herself rather than the evil-doer. A woman should have faith, like Sita and Draupadi, that God will protect her honour. God dwells in us in the form of His qualities and protects us. [Do you understand] this? Mahadev had received your letter. Did you get his reply?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S N 9473 Also C.W. 1001. Courtesy: Nirmalabehn I. Mehta

[1] Son of Mahadev Desai

[2] The source is illegible here.

302. LETTER TO KUSUMBEHN DESAI

July 31, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

You have been keeping the letter of your promise all right, but one may be said to have really kept a promise only if one also keeps its spirit. I have no right to give you this advice, for on the issue of milk I was content to keep merely the letter of my vow. Its spirit was that if I could not take the milk of cow or/and buffalo, I could not take that of any other animal either. Because of my eagerness to live, I violated that spirit. If you can accept advice from such an imperfect person, you may. I on my part have released you from your promise. You may write when you feel like writing. I am sure you must have inquired about Pyarelal [again]. I have already written to you and told you that I am waiting for Harilal's letters.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1844

303. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

July 31, 1932

CHI. RAMA (JOSHI)[1],

If there is no letter from you in the next post, I will kick up a row. I want a detailed letter, giving me information of personal interest and about the activities of the group as a whole. How are Vimu and Dhiru? Do you find the Ashram the same place that it was, or better or worse than it was?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N 5335

[1] Wife of Chhaganlal Joshi

304. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

July 31, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

How was Surendraji's tree uprooted? Plant another in its place. Ask Viramati and Chanchal to write to me. Why can you not spin as fine yarn as Keshu?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N 5778. Also C.W 3001 Courtesy Vanamala M. Desai

305. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA N. KHARE

July 31, 1932

CHI. RAMBHAU,

You boys and girls are now old enough to have a sense of responsibility, and it is, therefore, right that you take up such work. What do you write in English? Send me a specimen of your English handwriting. Write a short essay.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C W 294 Courtesy. Lakshmibehn N. Khare

306. LETTER TO NIRMALA B. MASHRUWALA

July 31, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA, (TOPIWALA BUNGALOW)

I was waiting for your letter. I received the proofs of *Gita-manthan*[1] [just now], but I have not received your previous letter till the moment of writing. There was a problem about letters written to me, which had created some confusion. Things have now settled down somewhat.

It was very good that you wrote to me. You have many things to write about. I would certainly be happy if you give me news about everyone.

[1] By Kishorelal G Mashruwala

I had received Babukaka's[1] letter, and I had also written a long letter[2] in reply. He must have received it now. Give my blessings to Gomati. All three of us are well. Blessings to everybody there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. C W 2885. Courtesy. Nirmalabehn Shroff

307. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

July 31, 1932

CHI. MANU,

This time your handwriting was a little better. It will improve if you keep model letters in front of you and copy them with a reed-pen as carefully as if you were drawing pictures. You should first learn Gujarati, a little Sanskrit, arithmetic and all the processes connected with spinning, and then you may certainly learn English if you wish. You must increase your weight by a good many pounds. You will do so if you take sufficient milk and ghee and do exercise.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati· C W. 5760 Courtesy. Valji G Desai

308. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI

July 31, 1932

There is a *mantra* in *Ishopanishad*, which can also be interpreted to mean, "concentrate on the work before you". If one does so, one will certainly realize God. God is Omnipresent. He is present in "my" work too. What I think of as "my work" is in truth His. If I concentrate on it, I shall regard it as His. Anybody who does the Lord's work attains Him.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 335

[1] Kishorelal G. Mashruwala

[2] *Vide* pp. 127-31.

309. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

July 31, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

I may say your letters are beautiful. With regard to protection read the letter to Nirmala.[1] One whose mind is pure should have the faith that God would protect her purity. It is wrong to depend on weapons What if the weapon is snatched away? One who follows the path of non-violence may have no faith in weapons Non-violence and love are his weapons.

There is no violence if someone's feelings are hurt when you speak the truth. There is no violence if someone is hurt without our wanting to hurt. Supposing I ask for cow's milk, but knowing about my vow, if you do not give it to me you are not committing violence, but doing your duty.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C W 9912 Courtesy: Shardabehn G Chokhawala

310. LETTER TO A GIRL[2]

July 31, 1932

Everything written in books should not be accepted as sacred truth. We should not believe anything which violates our moral sense or justifies cruelty, no matter where we find it. So long as we have not acquired the capacity to judge between right and wrong, we should, in regard to what we read in books, accept the opinion of elders whom we trust.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 335

[1] *Vide* p. 317.

[2] The addressee had asked "If we do not believe what is given in the books about Mira's miracles, then should we have faith in what others say about her? If we do not consider books as an authentic source, then what other sources can you suggest about our heroes and heroines?"

311. A LETTER[1]

July 31, 1932

You are suffering from a subtle pride and diffidence at the same time. How can you feel lonely in the midst of so many human beings, every one of whom demands your service and in whose midst you have thrown in your lot? You are in the midst of books and you will not touch them. You are in the midst of Hindi-speaking men and women and you will not speak to them You are in the midst of workers and you will not throw yourself into the work and make two blades of grass grow where only one was growing yesterday, make two yards of cloth where only one was woven yesterday. All our philosophy is dry as dust if it is not immediately translated into some act of loving service. Forget the little self in the midst of the greater you have put yourself in. You must shake yourself free from this lethargy.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 336

312. LETTER TO A GIRL[2]

July 31, 1932

What a reason for not going to the Ashram! What would happen if everyone followed your example? Have you not heard the story of the Kazi and his dog? The dog died, and its corpse was taken for burial in procession, which was joined by the whole town. But when the Kazi himself was dead, there were hardly enough mourners to carry his coffin to the cemetery. Are you not guilty in the same manner or as the Gujarati *bhajan* puts it, "Man's friends are selfish; they will all desert him in the end." When a man dies, we burn his corpse. But you—I leave the sentence for you to complete. My point is that we must not make an individual the object of our affection which should be reserved only for his virtues. And this attachment should spring

[1] The addressee had said in his letter that he felt very lonely and was of no use at all

[2] The addressee had said that she did not feel like going to the Ashram in the absence of Gandhiji who had drawn her to himself as a magnet.

from pure love. Every person's virtues result in some concrete act or other. If we admire his virtues, we should promote the activities which constitute their outward expression. You must therefore go to the Ashram and take care of the girls whose acquaintance you have made. And sometimes join the prayers too.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp. 336-7

313. TELEGRAM TO KAMALA NEHRU

August 1, 1932

KAMALA NEHRU
ANAND BHUWAN
ALLAHABAD

ALARMING ACCOUNT PRESS ABOUT HEALTH. WIRE EXACT CONDITION.

BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt II, p 383

314. LETTER TO VIMALABEHN A. PATEL

August 1, 1932

CHI. VIMALA[1],

I got your letter. The information which you have sent will be useful to Bhaktibehn. I will try to pass it on to her, [but] a prisoner can never say anything with certainty. When you write to me next, please let me know why you wrote the last letter with pencil. Anybody who writes a letter with pencil without a special reason commits a wrong. That is, he is guilty of violence, because the writing in pencil fades out and gives trouble to the readers. Your handwriting is indeed as good as you yourself are, but because you wrote the letter in pencil the words have almost faded out.

Blessings and greetings to all of you from all the three of us.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. VIMALA PATEL
PATIDAR MANDIR
ANAND JUNCTION

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 3276

[1] Daughter of Narasinhbhai Ishvarbhai Patel

315. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

August 3, 1932

CHI. MANILAL,

I got your letter. You have asked for a reply by cable but a prisoner cannot easily send cables like that The authorities may perhaps forward it, but I must observe proper limit. Moreover nearly a month has passed since you wrote your letter and there would be no harm if another month passes. I, therefore, did not ask for permission to send a cable. It was not quite proper that a promise to hand over the lease was made directly, but now that it is made I have written to Kallenbach to endorse it if possible. The letter[1] is enclosed. I hope that you yourself will have been able to persuade him before you get this letter and it will not be necessary for you to use my letter.

Please send me a copy of the Phœnix Trust-deed. It is possible that there is a copy in the Ashram. But in case we do not find it there, I should have a copy to consult it if necessary.

I think that you will now stay there It will not be wrong at all if you have decided to do that. There, too, you will be doing service.

But do not be lazy in writing to me.

Devdas had a good spell of illness in jail. So he has been released one month before the expiry of his term. Mirabehn also was very ill. Dr. Mehta is seriously ill.

All three of us are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 4791

[1] This is not available.

316. *LETTER TO PRAGJI K. DESAI*

August 3, 1932

CHI. PRAGJI,

Parvati and you seem to be so busy that you do not get time to write even a single line. Here, Mahadev, Sardar and I remember both of you. Please, therefore, find time some day and write to us.

We are all right. Spinning is going on, as usual. At present Mahadev spins yarn of about 70 counts. Besides spinning, Sardar studies Sanskrit with the enthusiasm of a young student and is making rapid progress. Mahadev is studying French, and I am doing a little Urdu. Sardar makes envelopes from waste paper. That is his chief occupation. This letter will be carried in one of his envelopes.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 5033

317. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

August 3, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter of the 1st. I hope you are not getting frightened at the crowding in the hostel. If the girls are well behaved, there will be no difficulty. There will be none, either if we have perfectly learnt the lesson of non-attachment. Others can suggest mostly external remedies for your health. About internal remedies, you alone can judge. I do not have much faith in psychologists. How much can even the best trained psychologist know about the human mind? Hence, you yourself should try and know what connection your ill-health has with your mind and adopt the proper remedies. In this very letter, however, you say that heavy or light work and proper sleep or its absence do have an effect on health. Thus the truth is that both internal and external factors have a bearing on one's health. No one has been able to maintain good health with the help of mind alone, neglect-

ing external measures. You should, therefore, listen to Narandas's advice in regard to sleep, rest and work, and examine the mental causes yourself. Take any measures you think necessary but make your body as strong as steel. I should have told you at the very beginning that you should not take Kuhne-bath in warm water during the period of your monthly course.

The inner voice is something which cannot be described in words. But sometimes we have a positive feeling that something in us prompts us to do a certain thing. The time when I learnt to recognize this voice was, I may say, the time when I started praying regularly. That is, it was about 1906. I searched my memory and tell you this because you asked the question. In fact, however, there was no moment when I suddenly felt that I had some new experience. I think my spiritual life has grown without my being conscious of the fact in the same way as hair grows on our body.

This is how repetition of God's name wipes out one's sins. Anyone who sincerely follows that practice is bound to have faith. He starts with the conviction that such repetition will wipe out his sins. Wiping out of sins means self-purification. One who repeats God's name daily with faith will never grow tired of doing so, and, therefore, the name which he repeats with his lips to start with sinks ultimately into his heart, and that purifies him. This is a universal experience. Psychologists also believe that man becomes what he thinks. Ramanama follows this law. I have unshakable faith in the virtue of repeating God's name. I am convinced that the person who discovered it had first-hand experience [of spiritual life] and that his discovery is of the utmost value. The door of purification should open even for the illiterate. Repetition of God's name opens it for them. (See *Gita* IX. 22, X. 10) Telling beads and similar practices help one to concentrate and to count the number of times the name has been repeated.

Studies should be undertaken only with the aim of equipping oneself for service. Since, however, service of others gives one the highest joy, one may say that studies are for joy. I have not heard of anyone, however, who found unbroken joy in life through literary pursuits alone without devoting himself to service.

Art cannot be the monopoly of any country or individual. That which requires secrecy is no art.

It is the right and the duty of every country to protect its industries.

It is the duty of a person who follows the path of non-violence to give shelter to the homeless. Who should be treated as

homeless can be decided only by reference to the circumstances of each case.

What seems bad in its outward appearance is not always so in its substance. The unattractive appearance of Urdu books indicates their publishers' lack of means. But cannot their contents be excellent? In fact the contents of some of them are so. In making the list, however, how does the question of the work being or not being interesting arise? Since the list has to be made, the work must be interesting because there is interest in doing one's duty. If you take the trouble some time of learning a little Urdu, you will find the study interesting in itself.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 10297 Also C W 5748. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

318. TELEGRAM TO CHHAGANLAL P. MEHTA

August 4, 1932

CHHAGANLAL MEHTA[1]
8 PAGODA ROAD
RANGOON

GOD'S WILL BE DONE[2] CONSOLATION TO YOU AND MOTHER. HOPE YOU WILL FULLY CARRY ON ALL NOBLEST TRADITIONS LEFT BY FATHER FOR COMMERCIAL INTEGRITY LAVISH HOSPITALITY AND GREAT GENEROSITY. SARDAR AND MAHADEV JOIN ME IN CONDOLENCES. FOR ME I FEEL FORLORN WITHOUT LIFELONG FAITHFUL FRIEND. CONTINUE KEEP ME INFORMED OF EVERYTHING. MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

GANDHI

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p 342 and Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No 800(4)(3), Pt II, p 441

[1] Eldest son of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta

[2] Dr. Pranjivan Mehta had passed away on August 3.

319. LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK

August 4, 1932

Dr. Mehta is no more. I have lost a lifelong faithful friend. But for me he lives more intensely by his death than before, for I treasure his many virtues now more than ever. That treasure becomes a sacred trust. Here is a letter for Maganlal. I expect you to do all you can to make him a worthy son of his father. I have advised him not to worry but continue his studies. Broken down though Dr. Mehta had become of late, I expect he had preserved his original circumspection to make suitable financial arrangements for Maganlal's studies. Maganlal will know. I feel that I am not by his people's side at the present moment. But not my will, let His be done, now and for ever.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p 344

320 LETTER TO ESTHER MENON[1]

August 4, 1932

Brotherhood is just now only a distant aspiration. To me it is a test of true spirituality. All our prayers, fasting and observances are empty nothings so long as we do not feel a live kinship with all life. But we have not even arrived at that intellectual belief, let alone a heart realization. We are still selective. A selective brotherhood is a selfish partnership. Brotherhood requires no consideration or response. If it did, we could not love those whom we consider as vile men and women. In the midst of strife and jealousy, it is a most difficult performance. And yet true religion demands nothing less from us. Therefore each one of us has to endeavour to realize this truth for ourselves irrespective of what others do.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 345

[1] The addressee had asked "why the idea of brotherhood did not take root among nations in spite of the example set by Bapu, Kagawa, Albert Schweitzer and others". (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol I, p. 270)

321. LETTER TO MANILAL R. JHAVERI

August 4, 1932

CHI. MANILAL[1],

I have just received a cable about Doctor's death. I had been getting cables every day about his condition. You also must have received similar cables. I do not know whether you will have to go to Rangoon. I had been daily sending cables to Chhaganlal. Please let me know how much you can help in preserving Doctor's good name. I do not know whether he has left a will. If you know who is with Chhaganlal in Rangoon at present, please let me know. What will happen to Magan now? A beautiful nest is in danger of being ruined. I know that all of you will feel the loss of Doctor. But my sorrow is peculiar. I had no greater friend than Doctor in this whole world, and for me he is still alive. But I am unable to do anything from here to keep his nest whole, and that makes me unhappy. But I hope you will do all you can to that end. I will of course be in regular correspondence with Chhaganlal. Write to me regularly for some time. Where is Nanalal[2] at present? Hand over the accompanying letter[3] to him. I hope both of you are well. How is Tilak?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Read the letter[4] to Khimchand too, and pass it on to him.

From a photostat of the Gujarati C.W. 5045. Courtesy: Dhirubhai Jhaveri. Also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. I, p. 342

[1] Son of Revashankar Jagjivan Jhaveri, Dr. Pranjivan Mehta's brother
[2] Nanalal K. Jasani, Dr. Pranjivan Mehta's business manager and partner
[3] *Vide* the following item
[4] This is not available.

322. LETTER TO NANALAL K. JASANI

August 4, 1932

Doctor's passing away has put me in a more unhappy plight than it has done any of you. I feel miserable that my oldest co-worker or friend, call him what you like, has passed away and I, being in jail, can do nothing to help you. But God has a purpose in this too, it may even be His kindness. I do not know what strength you possess to preserve the prosperity of Doctor's nest. Use all the strength you have. We must wait and see whether his good name remains unsullied and his children perpetuate his virtues.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 343

323. LETTER TO BABALBHAI MEHTA

August 4, 1932

BABALBHAI,

I got your letter[1]. My experience tells me that, instead of bothering about how the whole world may live in the right manner, we should think how we ourselves may do so. We do not even know whether the world lives in the right manner or in a wrong manner. If, however, we live in the right manner, we shall feel that others also do the same, or shall discover a way of persuading them to do so.

To know the *atman* means to forget the body, or, in other words, to become a cipher. Anybody who becomes a cipher will have realized the *atman*.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati S N 9449

[1] In which the addressee had asked "The world has always been as it is; when will it improve?" (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 276)

324. A LETTER[1]

August 4, 1932

CHI.,

You are now without a father. But remember that the great Father of us all is alive For Doctor, it was deliverance from great suffering. I wish that you should be as wise and good as he was. You may not have his intelligence or learning, but you can certainly cultivate his goodness, generosity and truthfulness. And it is these virtues that help us. Those who revere Doctor do so not for his learning but for his virtues. You should not be impatient. You need not go to Rangoon if you have not already started. Do not worry about your share. I am writing to Chhaganlal.[2] Have trust in him. You will gain nothing by distrusting him. Write to me from time to time. I hope you understand my meaning. God will protect you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bhavnagar Samachar, 17-12-1955

325. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL P. MEHTA

August 4, 1932

Your conduct henceforth should show to others that you understand the true significance of Doctor's death. His many virtues are his real will. They are your legacy. I hope you will do nothing which may make your younger brothers unhappy in the slightest degree. . . .[3] I feel unhappy that, at a time when my lifelong friend has passed away, I am as helpless as a cripple. If I had been free, I would be by your side now. Perhaps Doctor would have drawn his last breath in my lap. But God is ever

[1] The letter was probably addressed to Ratilal Mehta, son of Dr Pranjivan Mehta.
[2] *Vide* the following item.
[3] Omission as in the source

jealous of our wishes. I must, therefore, content myself with what I can do through letters.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 343

326. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

[*August 4, 1932*][1]

CHI. NARANDAS,

You will find with this a letter[2] for Ratubhai. The clearing of the outgoing mail seems to have become regular once again. This has happened at the right time. For some time you may write to me daily if you find it necessary to do so. Inquire and try to get as much information as you can.

Doctor had been thinking of coming over in November, but we know that God does not always fulfil our wishes.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-9 Shri Narandas Gandhine, Pt I, p 447 Also C.W. 8244. Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

327. LETTER TO RATILAL SHETH

August 4, 1932

BHAI RATILAL[3],

Perhaps I will feel the loss of Doctor the most, because I am not able to do anything to help in preserving the prosperity of his business. Doctor was always apprehensive about how Chhaganlal would behave after his death. You can probably, if you do your best, prove his fear unjustified. I could see when I was in Rangoon that Lilavati[4] had great influence over Chhaganlal. I was happy that it was so. I could not judge whether Lilavati was making good use of that influence or abusing it. I did have some misgivings. I had even cautioned her and she had re-assured me. But in Doctor's letters which I received here he had expressed great disappointment about her. In Rangoon he had

[1] & [2] *Vide* the following item

[3] Chhaganlal Mehta's father-in-law

[4] Wife of Chhaganlal Mehta

even wept before me. I do not know what influence you still have [over][1] Lilavati. Nor do I know how far Doctor's fear was justified. I hope that you will not fail to contribute your share to see that Doctor's nest is not ruined, that all the brothers preserve good relations and do not quarrel among themselves and that the business does not suffer.

Please write to me frankly.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 7167. Also C.W. 4661 Courtesy: Champabehn R. Mehta

328. TELEGRAM TO NARANDAS GANDHI

August 5, 1932

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

CONSOLATION RATILAL CHAMPA. STRONGLY ADVISE THEM NOT GO RANGOON. AM CONSTANT TOUCH WITH RANGOON.

BAPU

From the original C.W. 8243. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

329. LETTER TO NELLIE SEN GUPTA

August 5, 1932

What is this we hear about your husband's[2] illness? Please send me a correct report and send him kind regards from us all. You know I have Sardar and Mahadev Desai for companions.

The Hindustan Times, 14-8-1932

[1] The source is mutilated here.
[2] J. M. Sen Gupta

330. LETTER TO HARDAYAL NAG

August 5, 1932

DEAR H. D. BABU,

It was a perfect delight to all of us to hear from you. You make me jealous when you say that at your ripe age[1] you learnt *takli* spinning. It was a great joy to learn that you had gained 16 lb. in weight. May you have many more years of service. We often talk about you and your wonderful vitality.

With regards from us all.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p 348

331. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

August 5, 1932

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I got your letter. It seems after all I shall be able to continue to write letters.

What had Kaku done?

Ask Ramibehn to write to me. What disease is she suffering from? She should realize that you are no longer in a position to serve your family personally. She should [willingly] make that sacrifice. She is, moreover, a woman of spiritual understanding. She should rely on God for protection. She will always enjoy that, wherever she may be.

I am trying to do something about Kaku. I had a letter from him. It is not for us to worry about him. If we can do anything for him, we certainly should. Do write to me regularly.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–6 G S Gangabehnne, p. 64 Also C W. 8792 Courtesy. Gangabehn Vaidya

[1] He was eighty-five.

332. *DR. PRANJIVANDAS MEHTA*[1]

August 7, 1932

If I were in the Ashram just now, I would have said a few words about this holy soul. He was my oldest friend. I came into contact with him when I first went to England[2], and our relations became closer as time passed. He was the first person whom I met in England and from the very beginning he acted as my guide and counsellor. But all this is there in the *Autobiography*.[3] Here I do not wish to write about our intimate relations. If we know what virtues he possessed because of which I describe him as a holy soul, we shall be able to emulate them, and can have faith that we also can achieve in our lives what he did in his.

Doctor had won a gold medal at the Grant Medical College. After that, he passed more examinations in England and was enrolled as Barrister. But I leave all these achievements All of us cannot shine as scholars. For that we require favourable circumstances. Men are not worshipped for their attainments in letters. It is for their virtues that they are worshipped. I saw Doctor continually progressing in such virtues as firmness of mind, courage, generosity, purity, love of truth, ahimsa and simplicity. Once he had made up his mind to do something, he would never change. His word, therefore, was trusted by people who had dealings with him. And he was always fearless. When he returned from England, he found that he could not keep up his self-respect in his native town of Morvi, and he, therefore, left it for good. Doctor's liberality knew no bounds. His house was like a dharmasala. No deserving poor ever returned empty-handed from him. He had helped and supported a number of people. There was no ostentation in his help. He never boasted about it. It knew no limits of caste or community or province. There were people in all provinces and belonging to all communities and faiths who had benefited from his generosity. Doctor had enough wealth and to spare, but he was not proud of it. He spent very little of it on pleausres for himself. It can be said that in his

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 2/7-8-1932; *vide* the following item.

[2] In October 1888

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXXIX, pp 41-4.

very large bungalow he occupied the smallest space for his use. I don't remember his having ever spent money in self-indulgence. I believe that he had relations with no other woman except his wife. During the last many years of his life he loved *brahmacharya*. In his early life, Doctor had little interest in reading religious books, but in his later life his love for such books increased. In a letter which he wrote to me here he mentioned the books which he had been reading. All of them were religious books. So far as I know, Doctor had scrupulously followed truth both in his business and his legal practice I know that he had great hatred of falsehood and hypocrisy. His ahimsa was visible on his face and could be read in his eyes, and it was becoming deeper day by day. Of course the *atman* in man never dies, but Doctor has become, through his virtues, immortal in a special sense. His close connection with the Ashram was a great help in its religious aspirations. Let us learn something, each one to the best of his or her ability, from the life of this holy soul.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M.U./II

333. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

August 2/7, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your mail today. If Narmada is saved, we shall think that we have rescued a cow from the slaughter-house. Help Liladhar[1] in every way you can. If you show him love, he may recover his balance of mind. Never let him feel that he lives outside the Ashram. And still he should be free and so also we. He must assume at least some responsibility for the girls. That is for his own good. Read my letter[2] to him.

Do what you think proper about Jaisukhlal's[3] daughters If the elder one does not stay there willingly, it would be difficult to watch her all the time. You must have read Indu's letter. Read my reply[4] to him. What is the doctor's opinion about Mani? If Kusum's lungs have become all right, take care and

[1] A shopkeeper of Vadaj. His family stayed for some time in the Ashram when his wife was ill

[2] This is not available

[3] Jaisukhlal Gandhi

[4] This is not available.

see that she does not weaken them again by over-exertion. She at least should find this weather good for her health. On two conditions, however—that she does not exert herself too much and that she consumes enough milk and ghee. As far as possible, help everybody who has come from the Vidyapith. I, too, had heard about Devdas, and also about Dr. Mehta. There is every possibility that the latter's illness may prove fatal this time. I don't know what kind of a will he has made. You must have judged from his letters that Chhaganlal and Lilavati have caused him much grief. What are Ratubhai's circumstances at present? You are likely to know whether his work leaves him any time. It would be excellent if he goes there as soon as he can and see that Chhaganlal and Lilavati play no mischief. I am sure Ratilal also would like to go. If he wishes to go, I think it will be useless to try to dissuade him. However, you will be a better judge of that. Where is Nanalal at present? I am not at all surprised by what I read about Harilal. I am afraid his whole life will pass thus. Read my letter[1] to Ramji. It is our duty to bear with him in as many things as we can. That will be our atonement for our treatment of the *Antyajas*. We are not likely to get better men from among them than he or Dudabhai.

August 4, 1932

If you show to the Municipal Engineer, Mr. Malik, the spot on the prayer-ground which was threatened by the flood, he will help you. I think you know him. He used to visit the Ashram formerly. If you ask Bhai Mavalankar, he will request Shri Malik to come and see you. The danger from floods was known from the beginning. That is why the weaving shed and "Hridaykunj" were built as farther back as possible. Probably this work cannot be done during the rainy season, but it would be best to follow an engineer's advice. Such things happen in Bengal every year. The rivers there are notorious for their power of causing erosions.

August 7, 1932

I got without delay your wire and letter about Doctor. I had been regularly getting cables from Rangoon. On the day on which I got your wire, I wrote to you[2] and to Ratilal[3] and Champa. I hope you got the letters immediately. You must have got my

[1] This is not available
[2] *Vide* p. 332.
[3] *Vide* p. 331.

wire[1], too. The fact that there has been no cable from Rangoon after the one giving the news of Doctor's death makes me think. Whether or not any cable is received, I think it would be best for Ratilal and Champa not to go. They should trust to their fate. I gave similar advice about Maganlal too.

I have made a little change in my diet since eight days ago. Eating *rotlis* twice seemed to be causing slight constipation. Hence, for one meal I eat four bananas. In the evening, I don't eat bananas, but eat some vegetables as I did previously. Just now the vegetable is generally *guvar*[2] or *patkalu*[3]. I mix the vegetable with milk and eat it. There is also a *mosambi* or an orange. I eat one in the morning too. This has relieved constipation to some extent. I am still watching. In the experiment which I am making now, most probably milk will remain one of the items. This time the weight came to 105 pounds. My health must be described as good in all respects.

There are 37 letters in all. Nine of them are bound with a string.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M U/I Also C W 8242 Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

334. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

August 7, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I have two postcards and one letter to acknowledge. Vallabhbhai makes the choice of the best envelopes from his ever increasing stock. No wonder you appreciate his art It is an art which turns waste into wealth.

I am delighted that Rajendra Babu is with you. If I fail to write to him, give my love to him in which Vallabhbhai and Mahadev join. I doubt not that wherever possible, you are speaking in Hindi.

You asked me the other day about a further selection of books[4] when and if you get the leisure. Babu Sivaprasad has a very fine collection of books. He and Rajendra Babu can help you to make the selection. As you like the *Ramayana*, you are likely, too,

[1] *Vide* p. 333
[2] A kind of beans
[3] Pumpkin
[4] "For reading when and if I should go to jail."—Mirabehn

to appreciate the *Mahabharata*. It is a big task but it is worth undertaking. And then there are the Vedas and the Upanishads. You can have selected readings from the former and read all the principal Upanishads. This course will certainly give you an insight into the Hindu thought that would be valuable. Your intuitive love of Hinduism will then have the backing of an informed mind. And it may be that you might have to correct some of the notions you have formed I would balance this reading by a reading of the Koran and Amir Ali's *Spirit of Islam*. Pickthall's translation of the Koran is perhaps the best. I cannot tell. But if not that, then Dr. Mohamed Ali's translation. I have now given you fully a year's course of good, solid reading.

I say nothing about Devdas as I am writing to him separately. Tea and coffee, if they are strong, are poison for a convalescing patient. Tea made after the Chinese fashion is likely to be harmless. You know how it is made, do you not?

The note you refer to from S. Sahai and Rajen Babu I do not find at all. It must have been left there. For the time being at any rate my post both outgoing and ingoing is again in order.

For the past week I have replaced chapatis with bananas of which I take 4 daily. This I did to avoid constipation which seemed to be coming. I feel better. The result of course is that there is little salt in the food now. I take none with oranges which I am taking. I retain a vegetable on which I pour the evening milk.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original: C W. 6235 Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G N. 9701

335. LETTER TO MATHURADAS PURUSHOTTAM

August 7, 1932

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I got your letter. I have preserved your letter about the cup.[1] At present all three of us are trying our best to spin fine yarn. Mahadev has reached nearly 80 counts, while Sardar and I are between 30 and 40. When we have reached our target, we will use the cup and I will then let you know the result.

The following points should be considered in regard to dress-making for *yajna*. (1) What kind of clothes can be stitched in the

[1] *Vide* p. 159.

shortest time. (2) What kind of clothes will be sold most. (3) What kind of clothes women can stitch more easily and what kind of clothes men can stitch more easily. (4) Whether this scheme includes embroidery and knitting. (5) Whether to cater to the needs of the rich also or only of the poor. (6) Scope of machine-sewing and of hand-sewing, etc., etc. The subject is an interesting one and is also of practical benefit. It requires very careful thinking. If at present, however, you concentrate on spinning, pay less attention to sewing. Think over it when you have no other work and make experiments yourself. Mithubehn and Perinbehn have done very good work in this field. But I know that your plan is much wider than theirs. If it can be implemented fully and if people respond to it, no cloth can compete with khadi. But at present your work is improvement of spinning. Give as much time to sewing as you can spare for it. Concentration on one work helps one to attain *moksha*, but to attempt many things at a time is self-indulgence.

As regards your relations with Motibehn, you should first examine your own mind. Do you still wish to enjoy pleasures of the flesh? If you have firmly resolved in your mind that you do not wish to do so, you should inform Motibehn and other friends about your resolution. That will certainly shock Motibehn, but your firmness will have an electric effect on her. Firmness means that you will remain steadfast in your resolution even if Motibehn loses her reason or dies. You should also be convinced that the good of you both lies in such firmness on your part. If, however, you have not reached this degree of firmness, give up arguing with Motibehn and silently live with her as other husbands live with their wives and exercise what self-control you can while doing so. If you do that, nobody will have a right to criticize you. Everybody can advance only within the limit of his capacity. In any case you will deserve criticism if you remain undecided and deceive yourself, your friends and the world. If you save yourself from such a position, everything will be well in the end. Do not think too much and get confused. You have spent a good many years in thinking. Come to a definite decision without further hesitation, and you will then enjoy complete peace of mind.

This is the meaning of the *Gita* verse: "The attitude, in this matter, springing, as it does, from fixed resolve is but one, O Kurunandana."[1]

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 41

Think over it and the verses which immediately follow. You will understand this letter more clearly then.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 3756

336. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

August 7, 1932

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I got your letter. My letter to you went to the Camp[1]. What is the trouble in your leg? Ramdas and Hargovind[2] told me about it when they met me this time.[3] See that you do not let your health suffer outside jail.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 5505

337. LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH

August 7, 1932

CHI. VANAMALA,

I got your letter. You should learn to do with your right hand everything which you do with your left.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N. 5779. Also C W. 3002. Courtesy. Vanamala M Desai

[1] Yeravda Central Prison Camp where satyagrahis used to be lodged after they were sentenced

[2] Hargovind Pandya

[3] On August 5, 1932 (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol I, 270)

338. LETTER TO NIRMALA H DESAI

August 7, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

Your elder brother[1] wishes that, instead of sending a [*rakhi*][2] for him on the Balev Day, you should send a *janoi*[3]. Ask Panditji and give him as much fine yarn spun by you or Anandi, whichever is finer—preferably spun on *takli*—as he requires, and get a *janoi* made by him. If you then give it to Narandas, he will send it.

You must have received your elder brother's letter. Afterwards, he has sent a letter for your mother too. Send both the letters to her. I hope you have not lost courage because Mother is being tested Is it not our good fortune that we get an opportunity to suffer what other people suffer?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati S N. 9476

339. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

August 7, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

The story relating to the significance of the *ekadashi* is interesting. But we observe the *ekadashi* in a different manner.

For us, the *ekadashi* should be a voluntary vow observed both physically and mentally, and its aim should be self-purification. When a person who is ill does not eat, his aim is to cure his illness and not to observe a fast. Similarly, a poor man also who does not eat because he has no food does not observe a fast thereby.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati· M M U /II

[1] Mahadev Desai

[2] The source is illegible here, but Gandhiji presumably refers to the thread traditionally tied by a sister on her brother's wrist on the Balev Day, i e, *Shravan Sud* 15

[3] Sacred thread

340. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN RANA

August 7, 1932

CHI. NARMADA,

I got your letter. Personally, I do wish that you could stay in the Ashram and make great progress. Work hard and improve your handwriting, etc. Your resolution is noble. God will certainly help you in it.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Write to me from time to time.

From Gujarati C.W. 2758. Courtesy: Ramnarayan N. Pathak

341. LETTER TO DUDHIBEHN V. DESAI

August 7, 1932

CHI. DUDHIBEHN,

I certainly compliment you on your good gesture if you have given the yarn willingly. I can understand that you would like to go to Jetpur if Valji has to stay there for some time to come. The position will be clearer after he is released. See that Manu improves his handwriting.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7434. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

342. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI PATEL

August 7, 1932

CHI. DAHYABHAI,

One of the lenses in Mahadev's glasses is broken and as a result he is very much inconvenienced. A lens of that type is not available here. The glasses were got made in June-July last year by Dr Bhaskar[1] in the Whiton Company. The firm has got

[1] Dr. B. Patel

Mahadev's number. If it does not have it, you will get it from Dr. Hiralal Patel[1] who had examined Mahadev's eyes and determined the number If you can contact Dr. Bhaskar, take his help and ask the Company to find the number and make a new pair and then send it as soon as you can. Probably the Company will also have the details of the size of the lenses and of the frame. But in case it does not have them, they are given on the accompanying sheet. If Bhaskar is not in Bombay, see Dr. Hiralal. He also will help to get the glasses made. Mahadev wrote a registered letter to Bhaskar last week, but he does not seem to have received it. I hope Karamchand's wife is completely all right now.

I have not heard from Manibehn recently. Mahadev's work has come to a standstill without the glasses. Please, therefore, send them soon.

I hope the little boy is quite well. All three of us are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Father has written today a letter to Dr. Ansari at your address. Go and hand it over to him. He is leaving Bombay on the 11th. He will, therefore, be there on the 9th and the 10th.

He will probably stay with Usman Sobhani[2]. If he is not there, you will know from Usman's place where he is staying. Find out and go and hand over the letter to him.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–4 Manibehn Patelne, pp 147-8

343. *LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI*

August 7, 1932

Cling like a friend to His name. It will be helpful even when everything else fails.

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p. 351

[1] An ophthalmologist of Bombay
[2] A mill-owner of Bombay

344. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

August 7, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

It was good that you two girls were not frightened of Harilal and gave him bold replies.

Even though Chimanlal has come, if you like to stay in the hostel and if your health remains good, why should you not continue to stay there?

BAPU

From the Gujarati original C.W. 9913 Courtesy Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

345. A LETTER

August 7, 1932

It was good that you went to see . . . 's[1] corpse. All of us will arrive at that condition sooner or later, and we should wish, therefore, that when our time comes we may leave this abode cheerfully. As long as we have it, we should keep it clean, pure and healthy, but should let it fall when its time comes. We have been given it for temporary use. He who has given it may take it back whenever He wishes. And we should use it only for service of other people and not for enjoying pleasures.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 352

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

346. A LETTER[1]

August 7, 1932

I cannot share your sorrow. Your wife has been released from suffering. She has died at such a time and in such a manner that we should envy her death. Why do you feel that you are left an orphan? Only a person who is without God's protection may regard himself as an orphan. But God protects everybody. Hence it is only because of our utter ignorance that we regard ourselves as orphans. The armour which protected you was neither Mani nor your wife. Our true armour is not our relations, but our faith in God. The capacity of the human body to endure is much less than that of even a glass bangle The latter will remain in tact for hundreds of years if it is carefully preserved. The human body, on the other hand, does not endure beyond a certain limit however carefully it is looked after, and even within that limit it may perish at any moment Why should we put our trust in such a brittle thing? You should absorb yourself completely in the Ashram work and think about nothing else. You need not at all worry about Mangala, who is now a girl of six years. You yourself should look after her and you should also teach Shanti and Jekor to look after themselves. Probably you do not know that from her childhood Rukhibehn[2] was brought up by Maganlal, though Santok was living. There was little hope that she would live. She could hardly even breathe. Maganlal used to bathe this girl, dress her hair, make her sit down beside him at mealtime and feed her, and he also looked after his other children. And still he did more work by way of service than anybody else. The finest kitchen-garden was nurtured by him. In Phœnix he was the first to grow a rose. When he struck with his spade to dig some hard part of the compound, one felt as if there was a tremor in the ground. You can do all that Maganlal could. In all this, I have made no mention of his great artistic ability and his learning He had confidence in himself and faith in his work God had blessed him with a strong body It broke down at last only because of the heavy burden of the Ashram work and his stoic habits. I believe,

[1] Presumably to Shankarbhai Patel, a teacher at the Ashram

[2] Rukminidevi Bazaj

however, that in his short life Maganlal did as much work as another man might do in a hundred or several hundred years. I have cited his example to you because you knew him and it was his love which had drawn you to the Ashram Let his memory, if nothing else, help you to overcome your present helplessness and gloom. I don't believe even one person in a hundred thousand in the country has the means which you command.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp. 352-3

347. A LETTER

August 7, 1932

To us, all useful work is good and worth doing. Thus tanning, carpentry, cleaning lavatories, farm work, weaving, cooking, grazing cattle and all similar types of work are of equal value. If I could persuade the people, I would have all kinds of work rewarded equally, the work of the educated and of the uneducated, the clerk's work and the scavenger's. Probably you know that, in order to examine the problem from this point of view, the account of work in the Ashram is being kept only in terms of hours. If, therefore, you are not getting sufficient yarn for weaving just now, please do not believe that you are doing work of less importance than farming or similar other work.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 353

348. A LETTER

August 7, 1932

What I expect from the Gandhi family is that all members should devote themselves exclusively to service work, observe the utmost self-control and have no desire for wealth. They should not marry and those who are married should observe *brahmacharya*. They should live on whatever they get from service work. The field of service is so vast that it can give opportunities to countless men and women. Doesn't this include everything?

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p. 354

349. LETTER TO SAROJINI NAIDU

August 8, 1932

DEAR BULBUL,

Here is a letter from Dr. Ansari which you would like to read. It is meant as much for you as for us.

You got my message about your loving gifts! This is not to invite a repetition. We are spoilt children of nature and have everything we need in the way of creature comforts.

It is naughty of Padmaja[1] to neglect me for so long. I hope she is better. Do you hear from your bearded son? If you write to him, please give him my love.

Have the ladies there[2] told you that Sardar is seriously studying Sanskrit? He has made much progress during the four weeks he has been at it. His application would shame a youthful student.

Love from us all.

Yours,
LITTLE MAN

From a photostat G.N. 5124

350. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKAR PARIKH

August 8, 1932

BHAISHRI PRABHASHANKAR[3],

I got your letter. It is natural that we should feel grieved at the death of Doctor. For himself, it was a release from suffering. I have expressed my opinion and told Ratilal and Champa that it is not necessary for them to go to Rangoon. In any case I will write to Rangoon. I do not know whether there is a will. I think that safety and good sense lie in trusting Chhaganlal. All the same, you may take the advice of Nanalal or anybody else in whose judgment you have confidence. My views will probably seem impractical to you, but to me they appear most practical.

[1] Addressee's daughter

[2] In the Arthur Road Prison, Bombay, where the addressee was imprisoned along with Mirabehn and Kamala Chattopadhyaya

[3] Ratilal Mehta's father-in-law

I believe that the interests of Champa and Ratilal are safe. I hope Mother has recovered. My respectful greetings to her.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 8765

351. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

August 8, 1932

CHI. JAMNA,

I got your letter. It is the experience of most doctors that sweet curds will harm nobody. Sweet curds mean curds which have no taste of sourness at all. Everybody can digest such curds. If there is the slighest taste of sourness, add some soda bicarb. This will cause effervescence and remove the acidity. I do this every day. Fruits also will do no harm if they are sweet. *Mosambis* are always sweet, and so are the small variety of grapes. Eat all these things in small quantities. If they do not agree, you may stop them. And you must also take sun-baths and do light *pranayama*. I am glad that Janakibai has started learning Gujarati.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati C.W. 857. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

352. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

August 8, 1932

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

It is surprising that you received no letter of mine although I wrote many. The last one[1] I deliberately wrote in Hindi. I shall write at length if you receive this. We are all quite comfortable. My weight is 105 lb and I am taking milk. There is no cause for anxiety as regards my arm. Blessings to Sarup, Krishna and Kanta. Your letters do reach me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3421

[1] Presumably of June 2, 1932; *vide* p. 5.

353. *LETTER TO AKBAR HYDARI*[1]

August 9, 1932

DEAR SIR AKBAR,

I am studying Urdu. Just now I am reading Shibli's *Life of the Prophet* But I would like to see the textbooks and other literature issued by the Osmania University. Could you please have a selection sent to me?

I often think of our meetings on board.

Please remember me to Lady Hydari and the other members of the family.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt III, p 13

354. *LETTER TO MADHAVDAS AND KRISHNA KAPADIA*

August 9, 1932

CHI. MADHAVDAS AND KRISHNA,

I got the letters of you both. I am glad that you have given me detailed information. It is in adversity that we are really tested. But we ought not to lose heart at such a time. Welcome poverty. Write to me from time to time, though I may not be able to help you in any way. The knowledge that you two have not lost heart and can find happiness in adversity will reassure me. You must have received letters from Devdas. I saw Ramdas. He is in fairly good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U./XXII

[1] Dewan of Hyderabad

355. LETTER TO S. D. SATAVLEKAR

August 9, 1932

BHAI SATAVLEKARJI,

Many people here on finding Sardar learning Sanskrit have expressed the desire to do the same. Kindly arrange to send another set of the Sanskrit readers as they have different quarters. I do not know how far your institution can afford to send them free If you consider it proper I shall see to the payment.

Ishopanishad and other books have been received. I was awaiting your second letter but I got a chance to write this. I am making a careful study of *Ishopanishad*, I have even memorized it. I shall go through the other works too. These days I am reading the Veda number of the *Ganga*. I am sending you a page cut out from the article[1] by Sahityacharya Mahendra Mishra which has appeared in it. Please note the portion I have underlined in red pencil and throw some light upon it. The Veda number contains some more similar instances but I do not wish to bother you over-much.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Hindi C.W. 4764. Courtesy S. D Satavlekar

356 LETTER TO BENARSILAL BAZAJ

August 9, 1932

CHI. BENARSI,

I have your letter. There was some confusion about my correspondence but it has been set right now. Do you get any news from Father[2]? How is he? It would have been good if Rukmini had gone away with Madhav [for a change]. She has lost much weight. Health is wealth and the basic requisite for

[1] In which, quoting from the Vedas, the author had tried to establish the prevalence of cow-sacrifice and beef-eating in the Vedic period Satavlekar, in his reply dated October 20, 1932, refuted the assertion (S.N. 18590).

[2] Rameshwarlal Bazaj

every kind of happiness. You are keeping well, I hope. How is business? You must be meeting Devdas.

Blessings from
BAPU

SYT. BENARSILAL
K 23/96 PANCHAGANGA
BENARES CITY

From Hindi C.W. 9449. Courtesy: Benarsilal Bazaj

357. LETTER TO E. E. DOYLE

August 10, 1932

DEAR COL. DOYLE,

Referring to my letter of the 22nd and 24th ultimo and your kind reply, I have not since heard from you and Kaka Kalelkar who you said was to be permitted to write to me about his health. I would appreciate early attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I.G.P. File No. 9

358. LETTER TO MANSHANKAR J. TRIVEDI

August 10, 1932

CHI. MANU,

I got your letter after a long delay.

Now that you are studying, you should cease thinking about other things and complete the course. If after thinking carefully about the cruelty practised in the different fields of your study, you can prove that it is not necessary to perform such experiments on animals, you may do so when you are qualified for such an attempt. Some doctors themselves have opposed this practice.

I see that you are making good use of your time. Try to understand and follow the truth in the saying: "Study without reflection is useless." We do not increase our knowledge merely by reading books; we can increase it only by reflecting over what we read and by digesting it.

All three of us are well. Sardar is studying Sanskrit. Shouldn't his example be a great source of inspiration to a young man?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 1006

359. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI[1]

August 11, 1932

I understand that you have not yet resolved to give up cinnamon and cloves. I intend to write to Nimu. If she has already taken a vow, I will not press her to give it up. I will only explain what her dharma is. I think that one should not press anybody to give up a vow like this. The effect of such persuasion on a person is to tempt him to give up his firmness and in consequence his mind becomes weak. I do not regret the strictness which I imposed on the occasions which you mention. It was justified at that time. Now I feel the slightest degree of strictness to be as heavy as the weight of the Himalayas. Formerly, I had to fast in order to make people do what I can now persuade them to do with a mere rebuke; and other people, too, had to act more or less similarly. If I continue to act as I used to do, I would be a cruel man. Does this mean that others also have advanced, as I have done? We have no reason to believe this. But since I can now influence people close to me, nothing more is necessary. In other words, you need not yourself be strict with Nimu or yourself, for I am here to keep a strict watch. After my death, all of you will have to be vigilant. It is because of this state of affairs that we often find laxity creeping in when I am away. That is so all over the world. We should, therefore, learn to be fully vigilant in our own lives. At present we may be growing as a creeper does with the support of a tree. But this is a form of dependence. We should shake it off and learn to stand on our own feet. The cause of the electric effect on Nimu is what I explained above. Conditions were not the

[1] *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, pp. 279-80, has: "Today's letters were all from prisoners. One of these was from Ramdas who complained that Bapu who was very strict at a time in doing and imposing penance had now become too lenient and people took an undue advantage of this leniency. He seems to have taken a vow not to take cinnamon and cloves . . . with the result that his wife Nirmala has given up milk and ghee."

same at the time of my life which you remember, because the atmosphere then was not responsive. It had not been purified sufficiently to be so. If I were to write anything harsh to Nimu, she would feel miserable. Do you now understand the reason for my liberal attitude? There was the same love behind the strictness of the past as there is behind the liberal attitude of the present. What you say, however, is quite correct. It would certainly be bad if anybody misunderstood my liberal attitude and became lax. The reason for entertaining such fear is different. It is that I have become less exacting to myself. My former strictness has gone. The body does not obey me. I naturally feel reluctant to ask others to do what I myself cannot. I, therefore, often told the inmates of the Ashram that I was no longer fit to be in charge of it. The gate-keeper who guards the Ashram must be an ever vigilant and strong man. Formerly, I used to work as much as anybody else did, and so the others, too, had to keep pace with me. But now they do not have the example of my work. They have to follow my preaching. It is not surprising, therefore, that you see laxity in the atmosphere. I hope you have understood all this fully.

I like your vigilance. In this case, however, you should not be strict with Nimu. My ideas about the relations between husband and wife have changed of course. I would not like any of you to behave towards his wife as I did towards Ba. She has lost nothing through my strictness, of course, for I never regarded her as my property. I always had love and respect for her I only wished to see her grow spiritually. However, she could not be angry with me, whereas I could with her. I did not give her the same freedom of action which I enjoyed and she did not have the capacity to exercise it either. Hindu women never have such capacity. That is a defect of Hindu society. I, therefore, wish that you should treat Nimu as having the same freedom which you have. I once wrote[1] to her and asked her jestingly not to regard herself as dependent and harass you for every little thing. She replied saying that she was dependent and that you knew that it was so. The language is mine, but this is the meaning of what she said. This sort of dependence ought to be removed. If she wants a servant, why should she ask you? She can ask Narandas to provide one and may even quarrel with him on that issue. This is but a trivial example. She should, however, be free in matters which concern herself. If you wish to enjoy immoral

[1] *Vide* p. 178.

pleasure with another woman, you will not be afraid of Nimu. That you may be held back by your love for Nimu is another matter. Similarly, Nimu should be free to enjoy immoral pleasure with another man without any fear. Mutual love may save a couple from sin, but there should be no fear of each other. I began to teach this [equality and freedom] only in the Ashram. My behaviour towards Ba at Sabarmati progressively became in line with this attitude, and the result was that she changed. Her old fear of me has disappeared mostly, if not completely. Even if I feel angry with her, I turn the anger on myself. The cause of anger is my attachment to her. This is an important change which has taken place in me and it has had beautiful results. The results will be more beautiful only if my love becomes purer still. Numberless women trust me spontaneously. I am sure that the reason of that is my love and respect for them. Invisibly they produce an effect all the time.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 355-7

360. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

[Before *August 12, 1932*][1]

MY DEAR AMTUL,

I am glad you have arrived at the Ashram and taken your niece[2] there. I hope the climate will agree with her. You ought to keep well now The weather must be quite cool.

I was very glad to read your Urdu letter. Keep writing like this. It is good that you intend to learn Hindi. I am sure you will not find it difficult. Do you find any difficulty in reading my handwriting?[3]

I hope you can read my Urdu hand. I know it is bad. Let your niece write, if she can. How old is she?

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat. G.N. 252

[1] In the book *Letters to Amtussalaam* this letter is placed before that of August 12, *vide* the following item

[2] Kudsia, aged nine, lived with the addressee since her mother's death.

[3] This paragraph is in Urdu

361. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

August 12, 1932

MY DEAR AMTUL,

I have your letter. There was nothing to hide from anyone in your letter. I would like all girls and women to shed this false shame about the monthly sickness. There may be a sense of shame on the part of those who want to indulge their animal passions and treat the monthly business in terms of sexuality. But those who want to lead a life of continence should discuss this sickness as any other sickness. Now for the remedy. In the first place you should take perfect rest as soon as there is any symptom of the sickness coming and rest should be continued whilst there is the slightest discharge. During the free days of the month regular sitz-baths should be taken as also hip-baths in order to avoid undue discharge or a discharge beyond three days in pains. There should [be] no pains during the sickness. If there the treatment does not answer, you should allow the womb to be examined by a doctor. On this matter you should consult Mrs. Lazarus and be guided by her. She is likely to be able to tell you what to do. You should take Premabehn into your confidence She does not know much about this. But you two can put your heads together and read up the literature on the subject. If you don't know what sitz-baths are and if Prema also does not, you should read up Kuhne's book. If you master the secret of this illness, you can impart it to the other girls. It is the most fruitful source of the diseases of women. A false sense of shame prevents girls from understanding the sickness and regulating it in the proper manner. It is sinful to hide this thing and then suffer untold miseries. Herewith letter[1] for Dr. Sharma.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Your Urdu letter is good. I will reply to it in another letter. Today the time is up.[2]

From a photostat. G.N. 253

[1] *Vide* the following item.

[2] The postscript is in Urdu.

362. LETTER TO DR. HIRALAL SHARMA

August 12, 1932

DEAR DR. SHARMA,

I was glad to receive your letter. I would strongly dissuade you from going to Europe or America for finishing your study of natural healing. You have to do it here by perfecting your observations here and making original researches. Those who have done anything in this line in the West learnt from none but their own experiments. It is [a] vast mistake to suppose that by going to the West you can learn much of this art. It is yet in its infancy there too. But the first thing for you to do is to be your own healer. If you have a broken body, you will not be listened to by people. Surely your disease[1] will yield to sun-baths and regimen.

For my elbow I would not trouble you. Thanks all the same for offering your help.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat G N 3150 Also *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, pp 10-1

363. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

August 12, 1932

BHAI KHAMBHATTA,

I deliberately postponed writing to you. I wished to write only after I had used the oil sent by you. I have now started using it. It is ten days now, but there is no change. Mahadev massages the arm with it daily. There is nothing wrong with the arm in other respects, and so there is no cause for worry.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati· G N. 6601 Also C.W 4387 Courtesy: Tehmina Khambhatta

[1] Tuberculosis

364. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

August 12, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

The following books are required for Parachure Shastri. Send those from among them which you have there. I will get the others from elsewhere. See if you can send them soon. Give them to Manibehn or to Nandubehn[1]. Either will send them to Dahyabhai. Parachure Shastri was in the Ashram once. He is a man of great learning. He is in this jail just now. He has been suffering from leprosy. That is why I am in a hurry to send the books to him. He spins daily. I am not permitted to see him, but can write to him. His wife, too, is ill and confined to bed. She is outside. The books are: (1) *Imitation of Christ*, (2) Works of Swami Vivekananda (whichever volumes we have), (3) Works of Sister Nivedita (whichever volumes we have), (4) Essays of Tolstoy, (5) *Vyakarana Mahabhashya*, (6) *Yajurveda Bhashya*, (7) Dispensations of Keshab Chandra Sen.

Since Parachure Shastri has lived in the Ashram, he informs me that the last three are available there. He seems to have read them while he was there.

I got your letter. You seem to believe that I could write an interesting letter whenever I wished to. But you see now that that is not true. I cannot even judge which letter is interesting and which is dull. I am telling the truth. Moreover, who can say that the letter which you think interesting is in fact so? If there is an independent yardstick for judging whether or not a thing is interesting, God seems to have kept it under lock and key. On this earth, therefore, everyone has his or her own yardstick for this purpose. If I tried to come up to your standard, wouldn't I be in a miserable plight? All my time would be taken up in trying to succeed in the effort. Should I start writing a letter all over again, or a third time, for fear that what I had written might be uninteresting? And if I must write interesting letters to you, I must write similar letters to others. And the result, bankruptcy!!! Instead of that, I follow a simple rule. Without considering whether the letter will be interesting or not, I should write what I think in

[1] Wife of Dr Balawantrai Kanuga of Ahmedabad

such language as I can command. But you are foolish, and proud too. How can you ever appreciate this simple reasoning? And now I see that you claim to be omniscient. Any wise thing I try to explain to you, you seem to know it. But pause a little. One who believes in an idea or knows it to be true but cannot act on it does not in fact know it, or knows it in a sense and yet does not know it. Hence, as long as you go on writing foolish things, get angry and feel proud, you will remain foolish in my eyes. This does not mean that you should not let your pride, anger and foolishness be seen in your letters. As long as you have them in you, you must express them. The value of your letters lies in letting yourself be seen as you are. I don't mind your remaining foolish. But you must overcome your anger and be a little less proud. It is impossible to get rid of pride altogether.

You cite the instance of Narada. But do you know the real significance of his statement?[1] By all means worship a personal form in the manner in which he did. Such worship is proper. His Krishna is as historical as the God in Vaikuntha[2]. Narada's God dwelt in the temple of his imagination. That Narada is alive today, and so is his Krishna, for both live for ever in our imagination. According to me, imagination is superior to historical fact. This is the only possible meaning of Tulsidas's statement that the name Rama is more potent than the person Rama.

Is it not because you are caught in the whirlpool of worship of the individual that you worry me again and again? You have not been able to free me from worries regarding the Ashram. Narandas has succeeded in doing so. I can cite instances of other persons too. They also worship persons, who doesn't? But, ultimately, they go beyond the person and learn to worship his virtues, that is, his creations. We forgot this priceless truth and, in our ignorance, we taught women to burn themselves on the pyre of their husbands. That is worship of the person taken to its extreme! ! The real duty of a loyal wife is to immortalize in herself her husband's life-work. If we purify the relationship of husband and wife of sex and banish from it the distinction of gender, this ideal will apply to every woman in the world, whatever her state may be. In other words, love for the husband merges in love of God. But I leave this subject now.

[1] "Devotion means profound love for God"—*Narada Bhaktisutra*
[2] Abode of Vishnu

Why are you upset by the news that Dhiru is arriving? Have confidence that you will be able to control him too, have that much faith in yourself. Let the immortal statement, "Love conquers all", sink into your heart. We should be pleased whoever may arrive. Our only wish is to serve everyone as best as we can. Why don't you have faith that, if the other children have become well-behaved, under their influence Dhiru also will become like them? It is also possible that Dhiru has become a wise boy now. Personally, I have always hoped much from him.

You should dedicate your whole life to the service of the girls. If they do not talk frankly about themselves to anyone, they are bound to fall ill. Read my letter to Anandi. If she lets you have that letter, all the other girls who have grown up should be asked to read it.

I have never observed from my own experience that bananas give rise to gas. I have consumed more bananas than anybody else is likely to have done. For many years they were my chief food. I neither took milk nor ate bread. My diet consisted of bananas, olive oil, ground-nut and lemon. However, I never suffered from gas. After many years, I have started eating them again. I observe no ill effects. You must, of course, observe one rule in eating them. Either bananas should be cooked or they should be completely ripe. An unripe banana is pure starch, and I saw in Gopal Rao's experiment that starch should not be eaten uncooked. Hence, one should not eat bananas which have not become soft or ripe. They will become ripe if kept aside for two or three days. If you want to eat bananas before they have become ripe, you should either roast them or boil them in water.

The book which you read may have been published in 1924, but the theory which it mentions has become outdated.

I had opponents in the past and have them even today. But I have never felt angry with them. I have not wished them ill even in my dreams. The result has been that many opponents have become friends. No one's opposition has had any effect on me. On three occasions they sought to take my very life, but I am still alive. This does not mean that no opponent would ever succeed against me in his plan. Whether he succeeds or does not is no concern of mine. My dharma lies in wishing well even to them, and serving them whenever an opportunity offers itself. I have tried to live up to this principle to the best of my ability. I think this thing is part of my nature.

I get physically tired by the worship of vast crowds. It has never made me happy, nor have I ever felt that I was worthy of

it. On the contrary, I have always been conscious of my unworthiness. I do not remember to have ever hungered for honour I always want work. I have tried my best to make people who honour me do work, and, when they refused to work, I have run away from their honour I will feel myself blessed only when I reach my goal. But, as the saying goes, will that day ever dawn?

It is not necessary to cultivate pride or contempt in order that one may be able to stand against the world Jesus stood against the world, Buddha stood against his times and Prahlada also acted in the same way. All of them were humility incarnate To have such humility, one must have faith in oneself and in God Those who have opposed the world with pride have ultimately fallen. Sometimes your pride and your anger are only pretended. But even such pretence is an evil thing It may ultimately become a habit and often gives cause for unnecessary misunderstanding. One should be very careful in one's conduct so as to guard against such possibilities. I think it impossible for anyone to have the strength to stand alone against the world at a critical hour unless he or she has the utmost humility. And it is such strength which has any value at all. It is tested only at such a time. Many of those whom the world has believed to be brave, it had no opportunity of judging whether they were really so. Now read my letter to Amtulbehn too.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 10298. Also C W. 5752 Courtesy Premabehn Kantak

365. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

August 13, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

In India also, if our leaders live long they would rise very high. I have not read Aristotle's writings and have read very little even of Plato's. I can, therefore, say nothing about their ideas.

All the virtues mentioned by you are essential for universal service.

Children need good company. Tulsidas has explained the meaning of good company.

I have not read the article in *The Times of India.*

Anybody who has tasted the sweetness of honey in my company will taste similar sweetness wherever he goes, for he will find even bitter things sweet.

I did not receive the Anantapur report. The same thing seems to have happened regarding the *takli* I will inquire

I do not know who Emerson was Don't you know that my reading is more limited than even that of a good matriculate?

Anybody who seeks happiness in his own mind should have the same qualities as the *sthitaprajna*[1] described in Chapter II [of the *Gita*]. I have not read *L'Allegro*[2] and *Il Pensoroso*[3] either.

My ignorance has been tested fairly well. But I do not mind.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 7505 Also C W 4982. Courtesy Parasram Mehrotra

366. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN RANA

August 13, 1932

CHI. NARMADA,

I am glad that you have escaped. Live in peace now and learn everything you wish to. Acquire book-learning and learn some crafts too. Understand carefully the meaning of prayer, etc. You should try to rise very high Write to me from time to time.

BAPU

From Gujarati C W 2759 Courtesy Ramnarayan N Pathak

367. LETTER TO LAKSHMI JERAJANI

August 13, 1932

CHI. LAKSHMI (JERAJANI),

I got your letter.

There was some problem about my letter[4], and that is why you got it late by some days.

It was good that you sent me your daily programme. What subjects do you study? I will make one suggestion. I see no time fixed for prayer in your programme. Immediately after rising in the morning and brushing your teeth, you must sit down quietly and pray with complete concentration. And you should do the

[1] A man of secure understanding
[2] & [3] By John Milton
[4] *Vide* p. 139.

same when retiring. Prayer is to the soul what food is to the body. The body can live for some days without food A few days' fast may even benefit it. There can be no fast in regard to prayer. One who believes in the existence of the soul cannot do without prayer even for one day. Write to me occasionally and give me news about Vithaldas[1].

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati C.W 2813. Courtesy. Purushottam D Saraiya

368. READING AND REFLECTION–I[2]

August 14, 1932

We are taught at school· "Studying without thinking is useless." This is literally true. Love of reading is good. Those who are prevented by lethargy from reading and studying have certainly dull minds. But those also who merely read and never reflect on what they read remain more or less dull. Some of them lose their eyesight in the bargain. Reading without reflecting is only a kind of mental disease.

Many of us read in that manner. They read but never reflect on what they read, much less put it in practice. We should, therefore, read less, but think over what we read and put it in practice. We may reject what we discover from experience to be unsuitable, and go on with the rest. Persons who follow this method will satisfy their needs with less reading, save much time and become fit for creative and responsible work.

Another benefit which accrues to persons who learn to think is worth noting. One cannot always get books to read or get time to read them. Persons to whom reading has become a habit are known to have gone crazy when they could not read. If, however, one forms the habit of thinking, the book of thoughts is always available to one, and there will then be no danger of one becoming crazy when not able to read.

I have deliberately used the phrase to "learn to think" That way lots of people think, carelessly and unprofitably. This is only a form of madness. Some get caught in futile speculation and, over-

[1] Addressee's uncle

[2] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 11/15-8-1932; *vide* pp 371-4.

come with despair, even kill themselves. This is not the kind of thinking I am advising. What I am advising here is only that people should reflect over what they read. Suppose we hear or read a *bhajan* today. We should then reflect over it. We should try to discover its deeper meaning and think what we should accept from it and what we should reject. We should see if there is any error in its idea. If we have not understood its meaning, we should make an effort to understand it. This is called systematic thinking. I have given the simplest illustration. Everybody should apply it to his own case and draw necessary conclusions for himself, and may thus progress. One who follows this method will experience great inner joy and benefit from all that he reads.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U /II

369. A LETTER

August 14, 1932

It won't do for anyone to say I am only what I am. That is a cry of despair. A seeker of truth will say, 'I will be what I ought to be' My appeal is for you to come out of your shell and see yourself in every face about you. How can you be lonely in the midst of so much life? All our philosophy is vain, if it does not enable us to rejoice in the company of fellow-beings and their service.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 361

370. LETTER TO GULAB

August 14, 1932

CHI. GULAB,

I got your letter. I am glad that you feel happy there. Pay great attention to study. Also do exercise and improve your body.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N. 1720

371. LETTER TO SHAMAL R. RAVAL

August 14, 1932

CHI. SHAMAL,

When you are afraid of anything, you should repeat Ramanama. The fear will then disappear. You should go to sleep repeating it Does anybody sleep near you? We should have faith that God is near us. If a person has such faith, what need he fear?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 3145 Also C W. 2880 Courtesy: Shamal R Raval

372. LETTER TO KESHAV

August 14, 1932

CHI. KESHAV,

I got your letter. Improve your handwriting. Study with great attention. If anybody takes away a utensil from your hand for cleaning it, you should request him politely to permit you to clean it. If he does not let you, you should not insist. If there is any article which contains chillies, you should leave it in the plate. At the very beginning you should request them not to serve any such article. You should make do with *rotli*, buttermilk and salt or such other things which you can get. If you cannot do that, you may eat a little quantity of whatever is offered.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati· G.N. 3279

373. LETTER TO PADMA

August 14, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

I got a letter from you after many days. I do not remember having omitted to reply to any of your letters. I wrote a good many letters [to you]. I am glad that your health is improv-

ing. Give some description of Khadli. How many trees are there? From where do you get water? How far is it from Almora? Has Sheila grown very big? How do you spend your time? To test the condition of my arm, I spun for a few days on the Gandiva spinning-wheel. From today I have resumed spinning on the Magan spinning-wheel. My speed does not seem to be more than a hundred rounds per hour. Write to me from time to time.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N. 6135 Also C W 3487 Courtesy Prabhudas Gandhi

374. *LETTER TO BHAU PANSE*

August 14, 1932

CHI. BHAU,

For your constipation, you should immediately go and consult Dr. Talwalkar. It must be cured. I think that a *bhakta*[1] with a personal motive is one who asks for the fulfilment of some wish. If I pray to God daily for the success of the khadi programme, I would be a *bhakta* with a personal motive.

Arnold believes that the verse beginning with *agnirjyotih*[2] is interpolated. I also believe that it may be so. If we take it in its literal sense I cannot understand its significance. The general purport is clear enough. The first is the path of knowledge and the second is the opposite of that. The reference to the periods of six months is a metaphor. I interpret the verse in this manner for my own satisfaction. The difficulty which you experience when praying is experienced by everybody (in the beginning). But perseverance will help you to overcome both the difficulties. Despite the difficulties, you should keep up the practice of praying. One day you will learn to concentrate. We experience such difficulties because we do not feel the same hunger for prayer as we do for food. In other words, we do not have the same conviction about the existence of the soul as we have about that of the body.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6734. Also C.W. 4477. Courtesy: Bhau Panse

[1] Devotee

[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, VIII. 24 and 25

375. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

August 14, 1932

CHI. MANU,

Exercise books are meant for doing lessons. If you use loose sheets of paper for writing letters, they will cost you less. For learning good handwriting you should have a reed-pen. If you carefully practise writing in a copy-book, your handwriting will certainly improve. It was a little better this time.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. C.W. 7435. Courtesy Valji G. Desai

376. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

August 14, 1932

We associate the physical labour which we do in the Ashram with freedom and the other with slavery In truth, however, there is freedom for us in both. Those who voluntarily invite suffering should not complain against it even in their thoughts. On the contrary, they should feel happy in that suffering. How do you think could Sudhanva dance with joy in the pan of boiling oil? Or Prahlada embrace a red-hot pillar of iron? We should not regard these stories as pure inventions, for we see that people can act in this manner even today. The stories about Ridley[1], Latimer[2] and Mansoor[3] are historical incidents. You can call to mind other similar examples. Everything depends on the mind.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p. 360

[1] & [2] Protestant martyrs

[3] A Sufi martyr

377. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

August 14, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

If the same thing is mentioned in somebody else's letter, why should you not read it?

It is good that you have put on three pounds. Do not reduce because Shakaribehn has come.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original C.W. 9914 Courtesy Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

378. A LETTER

August 14, 1932

Do not try now to destroy . . . 's[2] soul. I feel respect for her obstinacy. How can we interfere with what she regards as dharma? On the contrary, we may even encourage her. It is your duty to support her. You should not get angry with her, just as you would not get angry with another woman for the latter's manner of life. The secret of inward happiness lies in such attitude of equality.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p. 361

[1] Addressee's mother

[2] The name is omitted in the source.

379. LETTER TO A GIRL

August 14, 1932

Instead of asking what you should do when you get angry, you should ask what you should do in order that you may not get angry. For that, we should cultivate a broad-minded attitude towards all and the feeling that we are in all people and they are in us Just as the drops of water in sea are different and yet the same, so are we in this sea of life That being so, who should get angry with whom?

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 361

380. A LETTER

August 14, 1932

Caste distinctions are not respected in the Ashram because they are not part of dharma They have no connection with the Hindu dharma It is sinful to regard anybody as higher or lower All of us are equal We are polluted by sin, never by human beings One who wishes to serve cannot look upon anybody as higher or lower. The belief in such distinctions is a blot on Hinduism. We should remove it

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p 362

381. LETTER TO A GIRL

August 14, 1932

Do not consider anything wrong unless your heart pronounces it as such. Ultimately we have no other yardstick, that is why we try to keep our hearts pure. The wicked man imputes rightness to sin because his heart is impure. However it be, he continues to act sinfully till he is enlightened. No one but yourself can judge what is good for you. I can tell you only this much that we have to tread the path of truth and non-violence and to that end we must observe some rules and regulations.

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp 361-2

382. A LETTER

August 14, 1932

One's respective dharma towards one's self, family, nation and the world cannot be divided into watertight compartments. The harm done to oneself or one's family cannot bring about the good of the nation. Similarly one cannot benefit the nation by acting against the world at large. Thus the purport is that we must sacrifice ourselves in the interest of the family, the family must do so for the nation and the nation for the world. But the sacrifice has to be pure. Therefore it all starts from self-purification. When the heart is pure, from moment to moment one's duty becomes apparent effortlessly.

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p. 362

383. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

August 11/15, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your mail in due time. I send with this a beautiful letter received from a lady[1] living in an ashram like ours in Italy. All the workers in that Ashram are women. The letter will give you some idea of the devotion and patience with which they work. Explain its contents to all the inmates, particularly to the women. Tell them at the same time about St. Francis. Mahadev once wrote a sketch of his life for *Navajivan*. Maybe you have read it. I have requested these ladies to write a letter directly to the Ashram. If you get any letter from them, reply to it. If, on reading this letter, you wish to write to them immediately, you may do so without waiting for a letter from them. But please don't think that you must write For all I know, they may have written a letter directly to the Ashram.

You seem to have had excessive rains there. It is practically the same here, though to a much lesser degree. The sky is clearing fairly well now.

My yarn was tested today and it was found that with the Gandiva wheel I have been able to go up to 53 counts. Mahadev has gone up to 80 counts, and Vallabhbhai has reached at least 40. I think such results can be achieved easily only on the Gandiva wheel. There is still room for improvements in it to make it suitable for spinning fine yarn. A few such improvements are being made by us here in the jail. Anybody who wishes to spin fine yarn must concentrate all his attention when he is spinning and have a supply of good slivers. The point is that one can spin fine yarn only if one pays careful attention to every detail. I feel more certain every day that, if we try to spin yarn of the best possible quality and the highest possible count, we shall be able to make many discoveries resulting in improvement in the quality of all yarn, and our own work will also become very methodical and neat. If we wish to bring this about, everybody who wishes to spin fine yarn should start using the Gandiva wheel. However, it is for you and the others there to decide about this

[1] Miss Turton of the Siena Ashram

after a careful discussion. Though my experience with this wheel is sufficiently long, I don't attach much importance to it. It will count only if it is unhesitatingly supported by others who also have spun on it. I attach value to my experience only as a guide to others. So far no harm seems to have been done to my elbow by spinning on the Gandiva wheel. I will use the hand as long as it gives service If it fails, I will go back to the Magan spinning-wheel It will be a very easy thing for you to spin on the Gandiva wheel I know that you draw the threads with the right hand. It is very easy to do this on the Gandiva wheel. If no bend has been made in the groove in the spindle-bearer, all that is necessary is to change the direction in which the spindle points If, however, a groove is already there, you should fit another spindle-bearer with the bend pointing in the desired direction. Since the spindle-bearer in my wheel has a bend, it is easier to wind the yarn firmly. I spun the yarn of 53 counts with slivers received from Chhakkaddas. If I don't write to him this time, please tell him that the slivers sent by him have proved very useful.

I hope Virsinh's fever has left him, and that Amtul also is better.

I received the slivers sent by Chhakkaddas, the Urdu books and the French dictionary. Shankarbhai's [arm] has been in plaster long enough I guess from this that the injury was quite serious. I hope the plaster has been removed now.

It is really a release for Narmada. What is Dhirsinh's caste? Who will pay the sum of Rs. 650? Or can Narmada's relations bear the burden? I ask this only for my information. I think Narmada has won her freedom fairly cheaply.

If Ratubhai takes any step regarding the affairs of Doctor, please write to me immediately even if it is not your day for writing to me. If you have learnt now who are there in Rangoon, please let me know that too.

My weight varies from time to time by about one or one and a half pounds either way. I have not tried to discover if there is any particular reason for it. There is no need to try. I have omitted *rotli* from my diet for the last ten days or so because of a slight tendency to constipation. Since then I have been eating four to six bananas for one of the meals, with milk and one spoonful of almond paste. For the other meal I eat some vegetable, as when I used to eat *rotli*. I eat it mixed with milk, and generally at both meals I also take *mosambis* or oranges. This diet has cured constipation. This time the weight was 104

pounds. I can say, therefore, that the omission of *rotli* has not resulted in loss of weight.

There is no change in the condition of the elbow. I received the samples of yarn spun by Keshu and Abbas. Both were excellent. I will preserve them carefully. On which type of spinning-wheel did Abbas spin this yarn? I have examined the statement of work done by the inmates as *yajna* though I have not studied it very carefully. If we want trained spinners to spin yarn of not less than 20 counts, we shall have to fix the limit fairly higher than that. Hardly anybody will fall below 20 then If a person does not wish to fall below the lowest step, he must stand five to ten steps above the lowest. Nothing in this world remains on a fixed level for ever. Nobody, therefore, can maintain himself on the lowest level fixed And so if one does not advance, one must fall. In the method for learning which I have recommended[1] it is not necessay for people to make a special effort to spare time for one another. In an institution where the necessary atmosphere has been created, the inmates will spontaneously give time to one another for such a purpose. Just as nobody makes an effort to spare time for eating but gives time to it as a matter of course, so also this matter of giving time to one another should be spontaneous Anybody who has wealth of any kind should willingly share it with his neighbours who are without it. But before such a habit becomes ingrained in us, it may be necessary, as you suggest, for the inmates to reserve some time for the purpose Hence, if anybody has something with him which he can share with others, the time when he can do so must be mentioned in our daily time-table.

You did very well in inquiring of Krishnadas if he needed help Regarding Nimu, I will write to her. Read the letter which I write. If she has taken a solemn vow,[2] I will not press her to give it up. If one gives up a vow, though it involves no sin, one's strength for making vows, that is, power of determination, diminishes. If there is a demand for copies of *Anasaktiyoga*, I see no harm in getting them printed in any press which you think suitable. If you think you cannot meet the demand, you should keep silent just now. I think there will be no harm in getting the discourses printed. If, however, you do that, they should be carefully revised in proof. I don't revise things carefully before sending them. Besides, my handwriting is bad. It is

[1] *Vide* pp 182-3.
[2] *Vide* p 353.

likely, therefore, that some bad errors will have been made. The discourses which I write now are addressed to the small circle of the Ashram inmates. Appa seems to have done very fine work. You have done right in asking Hariyomal to leave.

August 14, 1932

I did not see any letter from Narayanappa. If, therefore, he inquires for my reply, tell him that I did not receive his letter. Read my letter to Anandi and Amtul regarding the children.

BAPU

Mahadev tells me that I have not told you yet about Vallabhbhai studying Sanskrit. I think I did mention it. These days he is simply engrossed in that study. Whenever he gets any time, he studies Sanskrit or thinks about it. He gives about five hours to it. He has finished the five books of Pandit Satavlekar, and has now added five new verses from the *Gita* to be studied daily. He has completed Chapter I and is going on with Chapter II. This is how he started the study. There was a letter from Rajaji one day. He had mentioned in it having studied Sanskrit. That inspired Sardar. Five weeks have passed since this happened. Together with Sanskrit he started spinning too. He now spins with perfect concentration. The speed is increasing every day. He has gone up to about 40 counts.

August 15, 1932

Parasram tells me in his letter that you have already dispatched the Anantapur report. If that is true, please let me know the date on which you posted it. Did you send it by registered post?

There are 44 letters in all.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M M.U /I. Also C.W 8245. Courtesy. Narandas Gandhi

384. LETTER TO S. SATYAMURTI

August 15, 1932

MY DEAR SATYAMURTI,

What is the matter with you? I don't trust newspaper reports. I hope there is nothing serious.

We are all three doing well.

Advance, 23-8-1932

385. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ

August 15, 1932

CHI. JANAKIBEHN,

What pride! That, because you have been in jail, you do not write to me at all! As if you were the only one who could do so! How is your health? Where is Kamalnayan[1]? He does not seem to have received the letter which I wrote to him.

Where is Balkrishna? I have had no letter from him for some time. Madalasa also seems to have gone to sleep. Write to me about Shivaji and Radhakrishna. I have written to Chhotelal, but have had no reply from him, too. I expect you to tell me about all of them.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. JANAKIBAI
C/o SHETH JAMNALAL BAJAJ
WARDHA
C.P.

[PS.]

All three of us are all right.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2899

[1] Addressee's son

386. LETTER TO VIMALABEHN A. PATEL

August 15, 1932

CHI. VIMALA,

I pass your letter this time. It gets 33⅓ per cent marks If you want even more than that, tell me. The letters are rather small, but it does not matter. But they are not uniform. There are a few verses by Ramdas[1] on the art of good handwriting. Have you read the poem? If you have not, get from the Ashram. I do not have it here. It is a beautiful poem Do you know that we can make a carbon copy even of letters written with ink? There is a special kind of carbon paper for that. Your message was immediately conveyed to Bhaktibehn. But even then it was late. Dahyabhai had already seen her

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT VIMALABEHN
PATIDAR MANDIR
ANAND

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 3277

387. LETTER TO BHUSKUTE[2]

August 15, 1932

I believe in both Gods, the one that serves us and the one that we serve. It cannot be that we should render service and should not receive service of any kind. But both Gods are of our imagining. There is only one God who is real. The real God is beyond conception. He neither serves nor receives service. He

[1] A saint-poet of Maharashtra

[2] "There are two Gods There is the God people generally believe in, a God who has to serve them sometimes in a very refined way, perhaps merely by giving them peace of mind. This God does not exist But the God whom we all have to serve does exist and is the prime cause of our existence and of all we perceive." Referring to these words of Tolstoy, the addressee had enquired "which of these two Gods Gandhiji believed in, for if a man believed in the second God, prayer had no meaning for him".

cannot be described by any epithets, being not an external power but something dwelling in our heart. Since we do not understand the ways of God, we have necessarily to think of a power beyond our conception And the moment we think of it, the God of our imagining is born. The fact is that belief in God is a function not of the intellect but of faith. Reasoning is of little help to us in this matter and once we accept God the ways of the world cease to bother us. Then we have to accept that no creation of God can be purposeless. Beyond this I cannot go.

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 364

388. LETTER TO FELLOW PRISONERS

August 15, 1932

For those who find it difficult to concentrate their mind on their studies, it is a great help to forget the outside world altogether If a dying man has his heart in the world, he fails to attain release, he is unhappy himself and is the cause of unhappiness in others, the same is the case with a prisoner in jail who should cease to think of the outside world; for imprisonment means civil death. One who is civilly dead looks mad himself and maddens others about him if he pokes his nose into the outside world This prescription of mine is no new discovery [John] Bunyan could not have produced his immortal work[1] and Lokamanya Tilak *Gitarahasya* if in prison they had continued to worry about the outside world.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 363

389. A LETTER

August 15, 1932

Prayer and *brahmacharya* are not things of the same kind. *Brahmacharya* is one of the five cardinal vows, and prayer is a means of being able to observe them. I have said a great deal to explain the necessity of *brahmacharya* But when I tried to think how one can observe it, I discovered a powerful means in prayer For him who has realized the value of prayer and is

[1] *The Pilgrim's Progress*

able to pray with concentration, *brahmacharya* becomes quite easy to observe.

My idea of a doctor is a person who has acquired a good knowledge of his profession and gives the benefit of that knowledge to the people without charging fees. For his livelihood, he should take up some other work. Or he may live on whatever little the people give him voluntarily, but never regard it as fee for his services. In an ideal state of affairs, I would fix an annual allowance to be paid to such voluntary workers, in addition to which they would be permitted to charge or accept nothing either from the rich or the poor.

Japayajna means repeating the Name, so far as I can judge.

It is difficult to find how much exactly one should eat, but it is easy to eat a little, that is to say, resolutely to eat less than one needs, and that is the better way.

One who would keep the vow of truth should not think a single thought which he would hide from the world. He should not mind if the world comes to know even his silly ideas. What he should worry over is his silly thoughts, his sins. Members of the Ashram are worried by the fear that someone else might read their diary, because they wish to appear better than they are. But when a man does not care even if the whole world looks into his diary, why should he hide it from his wife?

The only limit to the keeping of the vow is that of our capacity.

So long as there is the distinction of *meum* and *teum* between friends and even between husband and wife, since those chained to a body cannot get over it, each may not take anything belonging to the other without permission. Your intention that you will put it again in its original place does not meet the case, if only because you can never be sure that you will live long enough to carry it out or that the thing will not be stolen while it is still in your charge. In observing this rule, we should not mind if we are accused of pedantry and even worse on that account.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 365-6

390. A LETTER

August 15, 1932

Achara means the outward mode of living and it can change from time to time.[1] The rules of inner living must remain the same, that is, one should cling to truth, ahimsa, etc. In trying to follow them, we may change the rules of outward mode of living whenever necessary. We need not cling to anything, saying or believing that according to the Shastras *achara* is the first step in dharma. All rules given in Sanskrit were not Shastra. Even the book entitled *Manavdharmashastra* is not really speaking a Shastra. Shastra is not anything written in a book. It should be a living thing. Hence the words of a wise man of good character whose actions are in accord with his speech are our Shastra. If we do not have any such lighthouse to guide us, what seems truth to us is our Shastra, provided our minds and hearts have been purified.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 364

391. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR[2]

August 16, 1932

MY DEAR MARY,

I got your letter today. I was wondering what had happened to you. I did not receive your letter in reply to mine.[3] Do write again and repeat your questions. I think I shall receive it safely. We are all doing well, engaged in various studies and spinning. We have more books than necessary.

With love from us all,

BAPU

[1] The addressee had referred to the verse "आचारः प्रथमो धर्मः।", i e., "*achara* is the first step in dharma", and asked what it meant

[2] Of Mission Boarding School, Hyderabad; author of *Bapu. Conversations and Correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi*

[3] *Vide* Vol. XLIX, pp. 68-70.

[PS.]

I note that you have joined the communion party that sings "Lead, Kindly Light" every Friday evening.

MISS MARY BARR
KARIM NAGAR
H. E. H. NIZAM'S DOMINIONS

From a photostat G N 5982 Also C W 3310 Courtesy F Mary Barr

392. *LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA*

August 16, 1932

BHAISHRI KHAMBHATTA,

I got your letter. I did not write my letter to you in order to discontinue your medicine but I wrote it to tell you that I had succeeded in getting possession of it. I do not worry whether the pain will be cured or not. I wished to use your oil because I knew that you had mixed your love with it. I will continue the massage till the bottle is exhausted and will not be in a hurry to stop it. How can I take sun-bath in this season? I will certainly take it as soon as the sky clears permanently. I have not tried cold packs, but I did apply mud-packs prepared with cold water They did not help The real difficulty is that the exact cause of the pain cannot be ascertained, and so we cannot be certain about the treatment either. The pain is not in the muscle but in the bone of the elbow It is in the left elbow and is felt only when the bone is pressed or when the arm is moved in a certain manner. Otherwise I am not aware of it at all. Personally, I believe that this is a symptom of old age If it is so, treatment is useless. However, the remedy suggested by you is completely harmless and I will not, therefore, discontinue it. I very much wish to request you to come over, but, since I have stopped seeing visitors I must obtain special permission for you to see me in your capacity as a bone-setter. I do not feel like doing that, for it means asking a favour and I would feel hurt if it was refused. For the present, therefore, I think it best to let things go on as they are doing

There is no trouble so far in my right elbow. The right thumb used to give pain when writing. I think it was cured merely through rest. I will give it more rest if it again starts paining. Mahadev massages it daily. I have filled this letter with the story of my pain. But it is not as serious as all that. I have

written at such length, however, because I know that you like to hear the story

Andrews had gone to Germany to see the grandson[1] of Gurudev there He has now left us.

I must prescribe for your lumbago. The only remedy for it is fasting, steam-bath and hip-bath. It is my experience till now that if these measures do not cure it, nothing else will Fasting is an art [Dr] Mehta in Poona has some experience in the matter Have you met him at any time? I have had no personal experience of him, but had it in the case of a Sindhi friend's wife who was put under his care Her complaint was of course of a different nature. I have mentioned her case just to fill the letter. Apart from fasting, and hip-bath, we have in the last resort the supreme remedy of surrender to the Lord.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 7551 Also C W 5026 Courtesy. Tehmina Khambhatta

393. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

August 16, 1932

DEAR DAUGHTER RAIHANA,

Again there was no letter from you. I hope that your health is all right I told you that I had written a letter[2] in Urdu to Zohra Dr. Ansari came to know about it. I wrote to him and told him that you were at the back of it all. He was pleased and wrote to me asking me to send his love to you. Please remember that you are responsible for the errors which I make. Write to me and explain the meaning of this *ghazal*[3] by Ghalib.

I understand the general idea of the *ghazal*, but do not clearly understand the meaning of every word. Respectful greetings from us all to Father and Mother. Has Hamida returned?

Khuda Hafiz[4]

[1] Nitin who died of tuberculosis in Germany
[2] *Vide* p 165
[3] This is not translated here
[4] "God be with you."

I have taken fairly good time to write this. I hope you will have no difficulty in reading my handwriting. Whenever you cannot write, ask Hamida or anybody else who may be with you to write at least a few lines. It will not matter if the letter does not contain the usual lesson.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu/Gujarati S N 9680

394. A LETTER[2]

August 16, 1932

You are right when you say that one should not trust a person who is not trustworthy. What I meant to say was that we should not regard anybody with suspicion. Just as we like other people to trust us, we also should trust them; and do not repent having trusted them if they prove themselves unworthy of our trust. Nobody has ever lost anything by trusting people. Those who betray the trust put in them always lose [something precious] in spite of gaining millions. We lose something only if our soul is stained. Wealth comes and goes, and we should not grieve when it goes.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 366

395. LETTER TO RAMESHWARLAL BAZAJ

August 17, 1932

BHAI RAMESHWARDAS,

I saw your letter to Mahadev. I have not expressed and I do not entertain disapprobation for anyone. I am acquainted with Benarsi only and I believe him to be a good, modest, simple and truthful young man. I am in no way dissatisfied with him. He writes to me regularly. Whosoever wrote to you is totally ignorant and why he wrote this is beyond my comprehension.

I have sent proper replies to all letters received from you.

Yes, I do have a complaint against you. You are staying on there[3], why don't you sell what you have and come here? Why

[1] This paragraph is in Gujarati

[2] Presumably this was addressed to one of the relations of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta.

[3] In England

be scared of poverty? Come over and share our religious life. Life is misspent there.

Rukmini keeps writing regularly.

We are all well. There is nothing serious with my arm. I constantly recall your love.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G N 9063 Also C W. 9447 Courtesy: Benarsilal Bazaj

396. LETTER TO RAMSAY MACDONALD

August 18, 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

There can be no doubt that Sir Samuel Hoare has showed you and the Cabinet my letter[1] to him of 11th March on the question of the representation of "depressed" classes That letter should be treated as part of this letter and be read together with this.

I have read the British Government's decision[2] on the representation of minorities and have slept over it.[3] In pursuance of my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare and my declaration[4] at the meeting of the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference on 13th November, 1931, at St. James' Palace, I have to resist your decision with my life.

The only way I can do so is by declaring a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind save water with or without salt and soda. This fast will cease if during its progress the British Government, of its own motion or under pressure of public

[1] *Vide* Vol XLIX, pp 190-3.

[2] On August 17, 1932 Ramsay MacDonald, the British Prime Minister, announced a provisional scheme of minority representation, known as the Communal Award The scheme fixed the number of seats in the provincial legislatures and retained separate electorates for the minority communities and for the Muslims both in Bengal and the Punjab, despite their numerical majority Weightage was also conceded to the Muslims in the Provinces in which they were in a minority and to the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab The Depressed Classes were recognized as a minority community entitled to separate electorate While creating a number of specially reserved constituencies for the Depressed Classes, it gave them the additional right to contest seats in the general constituencies, with this provision that special electorates and reservation would lapse automatically after twenty years.

[3] Gandhiji commenced writing this letter on the 17th and completed it on the 18th. For conversations regarding this letter, *vide* Appendix.

[4] *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, p. 298.

opinion, revise their decision and withdraw their scheme of communal electorates for the "depressed" classes, whose representatives should be elected by the general electorate under the common franchise no matter how wide it is.

The proposed fast will come into operation in the ordinary course from the noon of 20th September next, unless the said decision is meanwhile revised in the manner suggested above

I am asking the authorities here to cable the text of this letter to you so as to give you ample notice But in any case, I am leaving sufficient time for this letter to reach you in time by the slowest route

I also ask that this letter and my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, already referred to, be published at the earliest possible moment On my part, I have scrupulously observed the rule of the jail and have communicated my desire or the contents of the two letters to no one, save my two companions, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Sjt Mahadev Desai. But I want, if you make it possible, public opinion to be affected by my letter. Hence, my request for their early publication.

I regret the decision I have taken But as a man of religion that I hold myself to be, I have no other course left open to me As I have said in my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, even if His Majesty's Government decided to release me in order to save themselves the embarrassment, my fast will have to continue. For I cannot now hope to resist the decision by any other means And I have no desire whatsoever to compass my release by any means other than honourable.

It may be that my judgment is warped and that I am wholly in error in regarding separate electorates for the "depressed" classes as harmful to them or to Hinduism. If so, I am not likely to be in the right with reference to other parts of my philosophy of life. In that case my death by fasting will be at once a penance for my error and a lifting of a weight from off those numberless men and women who have childlike faith in my wisdom. Whereas if my judgment is right, as I have little doubt it is, the contemplated step is but the due fulfilment of the scheme of life, which I have tried for more than a quarter of a century, apparently not without considerable success.

I remain,
Your faithful friend,
M. K. GANDHI

THE RT. HON'BLE J. RAMSAY MACDONALD
PRIME MINISTER, LONDON

The Bombay Chronicle, 13-9-1932

397. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

August 18, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter.

I got the *rakhdi*, but late by two days. I had, however, taken it that I had received it on Monday.

If bananas do not agree with you and yet you go on eating them, they will not benefit you. Every stomach has its own peculiarity.

I have fully understood your analysis of the reasons why you get angry. Try to overcome your weakness. I know that you will succeed in overcoming it. I understood your meaning in that part of your letter which you had decided not to leave out. You did right in not leaving it out. There is great pride in not explaining one's need to a person whom one loves, it does him injustice and puts a heavy burden on him. Civility and humility on our part save him from the trouble of ascertaining our need. This is the first lesson in civility. Learn it now.

Write to Krishnan Nair and tell him that I often think about him.

You did very well in going to Rajkot. It seems your health requires such rest.

Public opinion means the opinion of that section of society for which we care. It is our duty to respect it so long as it is not against morality.

It is difficult to come to a just conclusion on the basis of the incident about the dhobi. Such conduct would certainly not meet with our approval in this age. Anyone who abandons his wife because of such criticism would be regarded as a cruel and unjust man. But I am not in a position to say what the poet's intention was in the *Ramayana* in narrating that incident. We need not bother about that problem. I would not. I do not read even works like the *Ramayana* from that point of view.

I believe that I must stop taking the freedom which I do with the girls if that shocks the inmates of the Ashram. There is no reason which makes it a moral duty for me to take such freedom, nor does my taking it violate morality. If, however, my refraining from it was likely to have an undesirable effect on the girls, I would reason with the inmates of the Ashram and continue to behave as I have been doing. If the girls themselves do not leave

me, I would have to consider how to meet the situation. In any case, no one should follow my example and take similar freedom with them. The freedom one takes should be spontaneous. No one should consciously and deliberately decide to take such freedom from one fine morning and behave unnaturally; it would be quite improper if anyone did so. Narandas is free to act as he thinks proper. I would not wish even to criticize him. The truth is that anyone who takes even the most innocent freedom with impure feelings falls into a pit and also drags others behind him. As long as the relations of men and women have not become natural in our society, one should certainly be careful in one's behaviour. There is no royal road in such matters which all can follow. There is a good deal of clumsiness in your own behaviour. Your innocence saves you, but it is certainly not proper for you to be proud of it and obstinately to persist in your behaviour. There is thoughtlessness in doing so. You do not see today the harm which such behaviour may do. But you may have to repent one day. No one's pride has endured for ever. One should not deliberately try to shock society, arguing that all conventional restrictions are bad. Have you now some idea of what public opinion means?

Write to Dhurandhar and tell him that he should bear in mind what the Major told him. He will himself have to become a walking advertisement for *asanas*.[1]

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 10299 Also C W 5745 Courtesy Premabehn Kantak

398. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

August 19, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

So you are again in your den.[2] I hope you will regain your lost strength and vitality. And you will be anxious about nothing. Simply concentrate on your spinning and such studies as you can easily undertake. We are all doing well. Love from us all. God [be] with you.

BAPU

From the original C.W. 6233. Courtesy Mirabehn Also G.N. 9699

[1] Dhurandhar practised the yogic *asanas* and propagated them wherever he went

[2] The addressee was sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

399. *LETTER TO GULAB*

August 19, 1932

CHI. GULAB,

If the thoughts which come to you are good, you need not worry much about them. If they are bad, try to keep them out with the help of Ramanama and think only about your work.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1721

400. *LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI*

August 19, 1932

CHI. PURUSHOTTAM,

I got a letter from you after a long interval. Do not worry if you cannot keep to the prayer hours in the Ashram. Both Jamna and you have weak health, and if a person cannot get up early in the morning he should not force himself to do so. The secret of being able to get up early is to go to bed early.

I think that hip-bath, sun-bath, fruit diet and milk, only as much as one can digest, would be a sure remedy for anaemia. Open air also is essential.

The book on health[1] has discussed only the diseases of which I had some experience.

BAPU

From Gujarati. C.W. 904 Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Guide to Health*, *vide* Vols. XI and XII.

401. *LETTER TO NANALAL K. JASANI*

August 19, 1932

BHAI NANALAL,

I was waiting for a letter from you as we wait for rains in the months of *Jeth* and *Ashadha*. I remembered you immediately the day I received the cable about Doctor's last sleep, and also wrote[1] to you. I even wished at that time that you were with me, but I did not know you were in fact so near me. I did not even know where you would be, and so I enclosed that letter and another for Khimchand with my letter[2] to Manilal. In my letter to you I asked for your help and in the letter to Khimchand I cautioned him. I mentioned my distrust of him and other' people's too, but told him that Doctor had great trust in him and expressed my hope that he would not betray it. Maganlal had written me two long letters about Khimchand about the time he went to England, and I had also written to Doctor on the basis of those letters. Doctor had assured me in reply that Khimchand had turned over a new leaf and that there was no ground for distrusting him. You should not feel any hesitation now in taking a hand in the affairs of the family. It is your duty at this juncture not to wait to be asked to intervene. Doctor's trust in you can be seen even in his last instructions. Chhaganlal writes to me. His letters have been very good. He has promised to abide by my advice. He has expressed his own views, too, but he does not insist on their being acted upon. My letters are not likely to reach there before the 13th [proximo] Hence, without knowing what I want he has sent me a copy of the note which you had sent [to him]. All the letters and cables which I have received up to date from Chhaganlal after the passing away of Doctor can be described as perfectly satisfactory. If he seems to have an ulterior motive behind them, you should guide me. I am proceeding with full trust in him. Ratilal Desai[3] has written to me and told me that he does not share my trust. I have as yet made no suggestions

[1] *Vide* p 330.
[2] *Vide* p 329.
[3] Son-in-law of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta

beyond asking him to bring the accounts up to date. For the present, I am collecting all the relevant facts. I sent wires[1] to Ratilal, Champa and Manjula and dissuaded them from rushing to Rangoon. I wished to restrain Maganlal too, but I knew that he would not have that much patience, and also that he did not trust Chhaganlal. My own attitude has been that the shares of the three brothers should be separated. From what Chhaganlal writes, Doctor's property seems to be very much less than I had thought. He says that there is practically no cash, and also expresses his distrust of Mayashankar[2] I think we should treat the last instructions of Doctor as his will. If, however, the total property is as enumerated by Chhaganlal and if there is no cash, how can we pay immediately the sums specified by Doctor? Please write to me frankly and in detail about all these matters. I feel unhappy that I am in jail at this juncture. But our wishes are not always fulfilled, and, therefore, we should do our duty as best as we can in the circumstances in which we are placed.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati C W 9462

402. *LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ*

August 20, 1932

CHI. JANAKIMAIYA,

So at last you took the trouble to write a few lines with pencil. It seems you could not shake off your lethargy even in jail I think it was a mistake [on the part of the magistrate] to have awarded you 'A' class He should have awarded you 'C' class, so that you would have had to do hard work. Well, be as lethargic as you will, but see now that you recover your health completely. I am glad you are having an experience of Vinoba's strict discipline. If you do not write regularly, bear in mind you will be punished. Did I tell you that the old blanket which you had made into a new one by stitching it on to khadi cloth had accompanied me to the Royal Palace?[3] And

[1] *Vide* "Telegram to Narandas Gandhi", p 333
[2] Mayashankar Vrajlal Desai, business partner of Dr Pranjivan Mehta
[3] *Vide* also pp. 157-8.

it is with me in this jail, too. I am sure it will last for many more years yet.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2900

403. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

August 20, 1932

CHI. LILAVATI,

You must have got my message. I hope you have calmed down now. Remember the second chapter [of the *Gita*].

It seems best to me that you should entrust your money to the care of Narandas and let him make any arrangement about it which he thinks proper. You should know from him what arrangement he makes. Obtain receipts, etc., and preserve them, or give the original receipts to Narandas to preserve. You should consult Narandas himself for further guidance in this. I am writing to him. From here I cannot think of any other suggestion to make. I hope your health is all right. Send me a report of your work.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9570. Also C.W. 6542. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

404. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI[1]

August 20, 1932

One of the many causes of illness is impatience. First the mind becomes impatient, and then the body. But it is the universal experience that 'the impatient get nervous and the calm remain self-possessed'. If the world is on fire, will impatience help us to put out the fire? And is it for us to put out the fire? Do you know that firemen do not shoot water at the raging flames when a great fire breaks out? They direct their attention to the parts round the flames. If they can save them, they should be

[1] The addressee had said in his letter that he felt frustrated by the environment and was impatient to dispose of arrears of work.

regarded as efficient, that is, as [karma]yogis. If we do our own duty well, we would in effect have put out the fire. It may not seem to the physical eye to have been put out, but you may rest assured that it has been put out. My long search for truth has revealed to me no other way but this, nor is it likely to reveal any other in future. If what I have said is not correct, it would become impossible to follow the path of truth and cling to it scrupulously. We can insist only on that which is possible. If anyone demands air of the mountains on the moon, we would have to call him a Shaikhchalli[1], for his desire can never be satisfied. And this is also true about the scope of our duty. Really speaking, everyone's duty is clear enough for him to see, for one does not have to look far to find it. One has to look no farther than the tip of one's nose. We have merely to clean the dirt immediately in front of our feet. As we clean it, we shall discover more dirt to be cleaned and will clean that too. It does not matter that, at the end of our lives, there will be as much dirt to be cleaned as when we started. In truth, however, can we say that life ends? The body perishes, but does that matter? And if life does not end, we should not feel disheartened to discover that the dirt has not disappeared A tailor's son goes on stitching all his life. If he falls dead with a yawn, a needle in his hand, he would be a man of true devotion to duty.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p 371

405. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

August 20, 1932

You will soon be released now. But you will feel unhappy that you cannot see me. I also feel unhappy. I may feel tempted to relax for your sake at least. But you also will agree that it would not be proper for me to do so. We have become what we are through self-sacrifice. You should, therefore, show patience. Write to me in detail.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 373

[1] One who builds castles in the air

406. LETTER TO BALKRISHNA[1]

August 20, 1932

I do not know with certainty what Shankaracharya meant by *maya*. This is what I believe. The world which we see and believe in is mere appearance, it is a product of our imagination. But in its true essence it does exist We do not know what that essence is. We say that it is Brahman, but we characterize all descriptions of the latter as inadequate. The world also is Brahman and not different from it. The difference which we see is mere appearance.

My view is that the span of our life can be lengthened or shortened. The truth is that every species is born with its natural functioning determined. We do not know and need not know what they are.

The divisions of time are man-made and they are smaller even than particles of dust in the cosmic cycles of time. Even if crores of units of our time as big as the Himalayas were added together, the total would be smaller than a cosmic cycle of time. It is very little, therefore, which man commands. Let him be pleased with it as much as he will.

There are innumerable physical causes of dreams. I have experienced that, while dreaming, we can be conscious of its unreality. Such a moment may possibly be the point of transition from the dream state to the waking state. Involuntary discharges are sometimes the result of purely physical causes and take place even without impure thoughts in one's mind. They can be stopped by changes in one's food. Mostly they are caused by constipation. When such discharges are due to milk, mostly the immediate cause is impure thoughts, since milk has a tendency to stimulate passion. But that is not the case with you. That is, milk cannot stimulate passion in persons whose bodies have become weak even if the person is of a passionate nature. All the power of the milk is used up in building the body of such a person. Dr. Rajab Ali's view is correct within certain limits. But what he says does not apply to persons who are completely healthy in body and mind.

[1] Presumably Balkrishna Bhave, brother of Vinoba Bhave

The desire to work for the welfare of the world is an essential element in the nature of a man of spiritual knowledge. There can be no exception to this.

I cannot say for what length of time I can keep out all thoughts from my mind, since I have never tried to test this. But I know that I am able to keep out unnecessary thoughts. If any such thoughts come, they have to run away like thieves

Hypocrisy is nothing but the mask which falsehood wears.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp 371-2

407. LETTER TO MATHURADAS[1]

August 20, 1932

The plan of voluntary dress-making for *yajna* is not intended to provide the work of stitching khadi clothes for the poor The idea behind it is to promote quicker sale without incurring loss, of khadi woven by the poor and to reduce its price which is felt to be high. . . .[2]

Do not pay attention to carnal thoughts either. Once we have made up our mind in regard to a thing, we should take it as finally settled. A vow means that the mind stops thinking about the thing concerning which we have taken the vow When a business man has concluded a deal, he does not think further about it and directs his attention to other things. We should act in the same manner with regard to vows.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp 372-3

408 LETTER TO MADALASA BAJAJ

August 20, 1932

CHI MADALASA,

I got your letter. You may believe that you are full of envy, pride, etc., but I don't believe so. From whom could you have got these defects? Jamnalal certainly does not have them, nor Janakibehn. You have also not come under the influence of bad

[1] Presumably Mathuradas Purushottam, *vide* pp 339-40.

[2] The discussion on food which followed is omitted in the source.

company. And there is nothing you lack. Yes, you are inclined to be angry. I, too, observed that. But Janakibehn also has that weakness And, moreover, your body is weak. But you are wise. Make a conscious effort, therefore, to overcome your short-coming. Other people also are human beings like us The same *atman* dwells in all of us Hence, getting angry with anybody means getting angry with ourselves. Moreover, no short-comings remain in anyone in whom a passion for the service of every living creature has been aroused. You should, therefore, cultivate greater devotion to service.

It will make me happy if you write to me regularly.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Panchwen Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p 313

409. *LETTER TO UMADEVI BAJAJ*

August 20, 1932

CHI OM,

I got your letter. Your handwriting has improved greatly. If your present weight is due to a strong build, why do you wish to reduce it? You will be better equipped for service if you grow up to be big and strong in body, provided of course that your mind also becomes strong along with the body. If the body has become merely fat because of some disease, you should certainly try to reduce your weight. Do you suffer from any disease? Write to me from time to time.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Panchwen Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p 335

410. READING AND REFLECTION–II[1]

August 21, 1932

Awake and arise, O traveller, it is morning now,
It is no longer night that you still slumber [2]

If anybody understands these lines to mean simply. "O traveller, arise, it is morning now. Is it night that you are still sleeping?"—then he has read the lines but not reflected over their meaning. For such a reader will rise early at dawn and feel satisfied. But a reader who wishes to think will ask: Who is this traveller? What is meant by "It is morning"? What does the poet mean when he says that it is no longer night? What does sleeping mean? He will then discover daily new meanings in every line, and understand that the traveller represents every human being. For one who has faith in God, it is always morning. Night may also signify ignorance. This line applies to any person who is negligent, be it in ever so small a degree Anybody who tells a lie also slumbers. The line is a call to such a person to wake up. We may thus read a wide meaning in the line and learn peace of mind through it. In other words, meditation on this single line can supply enough provision to a man for his spiritual journey, whereas a person who has memorized the four Vedas and also studied their meaning may find them a useless burden. I have given here but one illustration which occurred to me. If all of us decide in what direction we wish to progress and start thinking, we would discover new meanings in life and daily experience a new joy.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U./II

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 20/21-8-1932; *vide* the following item

[2] A popular *bhajan* in Hindi

411. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

August 20/21, 1932

CHI NARANDAS,

I got your heavy mail. There was a bitter letter from Champa. I immediately wrote a postcard in reply, which you should get on Sunday or Monday. Now that Narmada has been saved, we owe an especial duty to her. I think her education has been poor. Her handwriting is extremely careless. If she has the good fortune now to observe *brahmacharya* for the rest of her life, I think she will have to know things. See, therefore, if you can give her more help (by way of time) and educate her If she does not work with sincere enthusiasm to make good use of the time which you give to her, you may stop the help. About Liladhar, what you have done seems all right. If you can, try and make Jaisukhlal's daughters forget Amreli. What is the name of Indu's maternal uncle? What is his occupation in Palitana? Kusum cannot take up nursing as long as she is not completely free from the danger of tuberculosis. It would be very bad if she joins and returns in a month or so She ought to realize that nursing is a very strenuous work. A sincere nurse has to be on her feet the whole day. She can hardly find time even for a hurried meal.

Ratubhai's condition is pitiable. Why does he let his children remain in college when he is in debt? I can easily see that he will not be able to go to Rangoon. Will not any of his children be ready to come and stay in the Ashram? A boy who is truthful, industrious and healthy can rise as high as he wishes in the Ashram. Maybe he will not get there the education which he gets in a college. But, after all what is the value of that education?

You are doing a very good thing in keeping Ratilal from going. I had fine letters from Chhaganlal, so that I am now relatively free from worry from that source. I got letters from Nanalal and Manilal, too. Manjula has been writing regularly. She is rising higher in my esteem every day.

I have been having novel experiences in regard to my food. Eating bananas did not cure my constipation completely as long as I was drinking milk. I, therefore, stopped milk and ate bananas only for some days. For the evening meal I had bread and vegetable. This relieved the constipation to some degree. But,

being eager to eat the same food as 'C' class prisoners do, and remembering that in 1930 I had tried *rotlas* of *bajri* and that had cured my constipation, for the last three days I have been eating in the evening one *rotlo* with vegetable. That has cured the constipation completely. But on the last occasion the continued consumption of *bajri* had resulted in more than the disappearance of constipation, and so I had to give it up. It is possible that the same thing may happen this time. I have not decided to exclude milk completely for the present. I, therefore, intend to take it with *bajri* as soon as I am free from the fear of constipation. I have given all these details so that, if anybody there wishes to make the same experiment for constipation, he may do so But the essential condition for the success of this experiment is that there should be no oil or ghee in the vegetable, nor should any ghee or milk be taken with the *bajri* cake. In 1930, when my constipation was cured, I ate only *bajri* and vegetables. I did not eat fruit, nor almonds I had added the latter after the constipation was relieved. But I did consume sour lemons. The vegetables should include some greens.

If the doctor advises, Parasram should be got operated upon.

You are doing right in permitting Premabehn to go out frequently. She will take time to become steady. I do write to her letters to calm her.

I also can understand about the wire from Darjeeling. You have done quite right in taking no action on it. You should give a few details of the wire to Mahavir and ask him what the purpose behind sending that wire was. You should also write to Agamgiri and ask him the same question.

If anybody asks for permission to publish a German translation of *Vratavichar*[1], you may tell him that we claim copyright for none of our publications and that, therefore, he can translate it, but also tell him that it is essential for such a book that a translator should not depart from the original in any point.

When you say that Shankarbhai's arm will require treatment for a long time, I hope you don't mean that some defect is likely

[1] During Gandhiji's detention in the Yeravda Central Prison in 1930, he wrote weekly dircourses in letters addressed to Narandas Gandhi, from July 22, 1930 onwards, to Satyagraha Ashram, containing "a cursory examination of the principal Ashram observances". They were published in Gujarati under the title *Vratavichar* Subsequently, a chapter on swadeshi was added to it and the title was changed to *Mangal Prabhat* It was translated into English under the title *From Yeravda Mandir*; *vide* Vol. XLIV.

to remain. Or, is some other complication feared? Is the arm being examined by anybody from time to time?

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati· M M U /I ·Also C W. 8246 Courtesy. Narandas Gandhi

412. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR

August 21, 1932

CHI. RAMESHWARDAS,

I feel no pain while writing. I of course dictate to Mahadev when the letter is long. I do not remember your vows. If you also do not remember them, then forget about them and think as if you had taken none. Your mode of life is still not such that it can endure vows. But you should make resolutions slowly one after another. If you remember the vows and are observing them, please let me know what they are. Even if you do nothing else, keep repeating Ramanama. Some day you will suddenly see light in the midst of darkness.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 204

413. LETTER TO GULAB

August 21, 1932

CHI. GULAB,

A general statement that your speed in spinning and making slivers has increased tells the other person nothing. If you say that now you spin 160 rounds instead of 150 or make seven instead of five *tolas* of slivers per hour, that will tell him something.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N 1722

414. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

August 21, 1932

CHI. MANIBEHN,

I have your letter. I hope you do not worry about Narahari now. Why should we worry when we have left it to God to worry for us? And what do we gain by worrying?

I will write to Vanamala some other time.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 5971 Also C W 3288 Courtesy Vanamala M Desai

415. LETTER TO CHAMPABEHN R. MEHTA

August 21, 1932

CHI. CHAMPA,

I hope you received my postcard. Do not worry about anything at all. God will solve all problems. Prabhashankar has sent me a copy of the letter which you wrote to him. But as I explained to you in a previous letter, unfortunately for you, he and I cannot agree. I will go on acting and advising you as seems best to me. May God give you patience.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 8753 Also C.W 1041 Courtesy. Champabehn R Mehta

416. LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE

August 21, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

I got your letter after a long time. The programme is good. How much do you weigh now? If you feel sleepy during prayers, you are permitted to doze off. Do you know that one can go on repeating God's name even in sleep?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati· C.W 266. Courtesy· Lakshmibehn N Khare

417. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA N. KHARE

August 21, 1932

CHI. RAMACHANDRA,

Your English handwriting is very good indeed, though you are rather weak in spelling Do you understand the meaning of every word correctly?

BAPU

From Gujarati C W 295 Courtesy. Lakshmibehn N. Khare

418 LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

August 21, 1932

CHI JAMNA,

You wrote to me after a long interval. It is certainly good that you get an opportunity of staying in Rajkot from time to time. Khushalbhai's recovery to this extent is indeed a miracle. Tell Jamnadas that I should be happy if he stops being lazy in writing to me.

BAPU

From Gujarati C W 858. Courtesy Narandas Gandhi

419. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN RANA

August 21, 1932

CHI. NARMADA,

You should improve your handwriting. You should leave some space on both sides The words should be spaced well. The line should be straight. It will be better if you use a reed-pen.

I should like you to become accomplished in everything. What do you mean by a boy's dress? Please describe it. For how many years have you been wearing it, and on whose advice?

Let me know your programme of daily work.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C W 2760 Courtesy Ramnarayan N Pathak

420. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

August 21, 1932

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I got your letter. It would be very good indeed if Ramibehn[1] recovers before leaving that place. I hope you got all my letters. Regain the weight which you have lost. Feel no hesitation in eating any food which may be necessary for your health.

The change which has taken place in Kaku's brother and sister is very good.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–6 G S. Gangabehnne, p 64 Also C.W. 8794 Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

421. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

August 21, 1932

CHI. VIDYA,

You seem to have become very hard-working. That is certainly very good. But you must improve your handwriting.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C W. 9430. Courtesy Ravindra R Patel

422. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

August 21, 1932

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

Nowadays your letters have become dull. It is not possible that nothing worth mentioning would have happened during a whole week.

You can describe the trees and plants and the cattle which you see, you can give an account of your work, can say who was most alert and who was lazy, what books you read, etc. You can

[1] Ramibehn Kamdar, addressee's sister

describe innumerable other things like these if you but try to think. Why don't you write about [all][1] these things in your letters?

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati. M M U /II

423. LETTER TO KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ

August 21, 1932

CHI. KAMALNAYAN,

It was your duty to write to me immediately after your release. Did you get the letter which I wrote to you? You have acquired very useful experience indeed. I have a faint recollection of having received a letter from you before I left for England. I have also an impression that I replied to your question. I now forget what the question was Ask it again.

Narmada scribbled a confused description and cleverly got off. That is a sign of lethargy.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi G N 3048

424. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

August 21, 1932

MY DEAR AMTUL,

Your inquiry about the Koran is pertinent. I do not believe any gospel to be a message from God delivered to someone by the angels but I do believe it to be the promptings of the inner voice of the prophets. This much should suffice for us. It is good that you are planning to understand well the text of the Koran. The very purpose of the study of scriptures is to comprehend fully the text and its impact upon our heart

How is it that Kudsia knows no Urdu? Do all the members of your family know English only? Give me the history of your clan, where it originally belonged to, when and how the interest in Urdu was lost? I suppose you are all right now. Do not overwork or take anything to heart. Be cheerful and be satisfied with

[1] Illegible in the source

what God permits you to do. You must have forwarded the letter to Dr. Sharma. Tell me if you can read my letter with ease. I would prefer to write in Urdu if that pleases you. Every week you must point out my mistakes. But tell me unhesitatingly if you like my English letters better. I want you to be happy. It is better that you write to me in Urdu but in that case you will have to write legibly, otherwise I shall be unable to read the letter.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G N 254

425. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

August 21, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

The word for 'learned' in the *shloka* you have quoted includes the meaning 'virtuous'. In the olden times the word for a learned man, viz , *vidvan* was synonymous with *vedavid*, meaning 'the knower of the Vedas', and it was believed that anyone who knew the Vedas was bound to be virtuous What I meant to say was that Doctor was respected because of his virtue This does not mean that scholarship may never be honoured. But we know very well that there are many highly learned people who are utterly ignored.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original C W. 9915 Courtesy Shardabehn G Chokhawala

426. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

August 22, 1932

CHI. MANILAL,

I have your letter. I am more than happy that both of you are free from fever. I hope that you have fully regained your normal health. I was pained to read what you say about Pragji. I had a letter from Mr. Ritch, in which he expresses his view that Phoenix ought not to be disbanded He writes nothing about Pragji, but he has some complaint against you. He says that you have got involved with Sorabji and have lost some money. I hope that this is not true. What you have belongs to the Trust. Surely you know that you cannot take anything from

it except what you need to meet your normal expenses. You can neither advance a loan or make a gift from it, nor can borrow money against it. I think that the plot of twenty-five *bighas* also was leased out to meet the needs of *Indian Opinion*. Even that was a mistake, however. Since you yourself realized it, I need not say anything about it.

If you are sure that Pragji has been concerned only with his own interest, then I think that you ought not to use his services for *Indian Opinion*. I will write to him if you wish that I should do so.

All three of us are well. Devdas has recovered. He will take rest for some time. Pyarelal has been released Manibehn is again in jail for one year and three months. Ramdas is all right. Ba is about to be released. She has lost some weight.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G N. 4793

427. LETTER TO SUSHILABEHN GANDHI

August 22, 1932

CHI. SUSHILA,

Though your letter of two pages seemed long to you, a lazy woman, I found it much too short. Do you know that, whenever I wrote to my brother from England, I used to fill 20 to 25 pages and still I thought the letter was too short? I did not feel, either, that Brother would find it too long and that it would be a bother to him to read it. I was sure that he would like a long letter. I would write about everything I might have done during the week, everyone I might have met and everything I might have read and every foolishness I might have committed. No wonder the letter would be so many pages long. Moreover, I used to write only to my brother, and so I would unburden myself completely in the letter.

But you are a princess who would, if she could, write only one line but writes 50 lines with the words written wide apart from one another, and thinks that she has written quite a long letter. All right. Please yourself and rule Manilal. You were married to him because he is a rather simple man and you are deep. I always believe that your judgement about people would be correct. Exercise a little more control over him. Don't think that, because he is your husband, you have done your duty when you have

advised or warned him. A good wife should hold the husband back by the ear and save him from falling into a pit. I believe that you have that strength. There is an agreement between Manilal and me that he should not look upon you as his servant but should regard you as his life-companion, his partner in the duties of life and his better-half. You two, therefore, have equal rights over each other. Since you are gifted with greater intuition, you have, to that extent, greater authority over him than he over you in matters which require it. He knows more about the press and, therefore, he has greater authority in that field. Similarly, he knows more about water-treatment, and so he may have greater authority in that field too. When you read my letter to Manilal, you will understand what all this means. How is your ear? Does Tara write to you?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4792

428. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

August 22, 1932

BHAI KHAMBHATTA,

I have your letter. Do send your ointment. I will try it. But I should tell you that I have tried iodine for a long time. If the ointment contains some other useful ingredients, it may be worth trying. What a poor memory I have that I forgot that we had Vidya treated by you. It is true that one should not have any illness even in old age. But that can be expected only of a person who has refrained from bodily pleasures throughout his life. But I have indulged in plenty of them. Only one was left, namely that I never had my hands massaged before going to bed. That is why I remember you every day at night.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6602. Also C.W. 4388. Courtesy Tehmina Khambhatta

429. LETTER TO TRAMBAKLAL

August 22, 1932

CHI. TRAMBAKLAL,

Chhaganbhai has full trust in you Doctor also trusted you. I am sure that you are doing your best to keep Doctor's family united Please write to me and let me know about any difficulties which hinder your efforts. And let me also have any suggestions which you would like to make.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C W 9436

430. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

August 22, 1932

DEAR DAUGHTER RAIHANA,

I got your letter, and also Father's today I had received your letter in which you had copied Dagh's *ghazal*, but after considerable delay. I have an impression that I had written to you about having received one of your letters I liked that *ghazal*. I have all your letters with me. Why did you trouble Mother about Ghalib's *ghazal*? I do not wish to give so much trouble to you either. Whatever you can give without much trouble to yourself will be enough for me I have now got quite a few Urdu books. It is good that Purohitji has been released. Why did Bhaiji have to drop the idea of going to Afghanistan? Mahadev is learning French and Urdu. Father used to teach him French. Since then he has not given it up. He will think about learning the language of Timbuctoo after having learnt these two. But, then, you will have to teach it to him, because you are likely to be the only one in our world who knows that language. I am not writing separately to Father There is danger in writing to elders Give my regards to Father and Mother, and *vandemataram* to the others. To you a slap.

BAPU

[PS]

It took me half an hour to write this much. It is all your fault. Why cannot I write with speed?[1]

Blessings, good wishes, etc , from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu/Gujarati S N. 9671

431. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

August 23, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I wrote one letter[2] or rather postcard at your new address.

I had made up my mind not to chide you even mentally if you fell ill again. I said to myself when I heard of your illness from Kashi that it would not do to be finding fault with you every time you got ill. No doubt we get ill through our faults. But the difficulty lies in our inability always to know our errors beforehand The other is our inability always to guard against them even when we know them. It is therefore enough to know these truths that we ail through our own mistakes and then not always to be chiding ourselves when we do get ill Your latest lapse therefore does not surprise me. It was inevitable in the circumstances related by you. God be thanked that you are able to tide over these illnesses without their leaving bad after-effects The elimination [of] disease germs through natural treatment often leaves the system purer and stronger The rest you are getting is providential. And you are not going to bother if you get no permission to receive visitors or even to write letters. Only 50 years ago prisoners could not receive visitors or write letters Ordinary prison life nowadays has lost all its terrors. It was a great movement Howard[3] set on foot. It is only in its beginning stages. The day is not far distant when prisons will be rechristened and persons will be merely detained so as to be unable to do harm whether moral, social or political in accordance with the conception of the respective States. But we have to rejoice whatever the conditions of jail life, trying nevertheless to secure relief wherever possible

Now about my food. Do you not remember that here in Yeravda I could not get rid of constipation with milk and juicy fruit and that I was able to do so only by dropping milk? This

[1] The postscript is in Gujarati

[2] *Vide* p 386

[3] John Howard, English philanthropist and prison-reformer

time, too, I had dropped milk only because I could not keep myself fit on milk and fruit. This time I began banana with milk. There was slight improvement. But that was not enough. I have therefore just for a few days dropped milk and am taking *bajri* chapati instead of wheat and the effect has been marvellous. During last incarceration[1] it was *bajri* that removed my constipation. And I was able to pass the rest of the term on bread, vegetables and almond cream. I propose to go back to milk and see whether with *bajri* I am able to avoid constipation. I am keeping excellent health. And as you can see I am writing with the right hand without coming to grief. For the better protection of the left elbow, I have gone back to the Magan charkha and am this time able to draw over 30 counts. I am satisfied with this. The output per hour is still bad. It hardly reaches 100 rounds per hour.

Vallabhbhai is making very rapid progress with his Sanskrit. Mahadev is doing both French and Urdu. So our time is being very usefully spent. The weather has suddenly turned bright and very hot here—unusual at this time of the year. I hope it is not bad with you.

I hope you have the mosquito-net.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6234. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9700

432. *LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT*

August 23, 1932

CHI. VASUMATI,

Now I can write a separate letter to you. You could not meet Mahadev after all. I had expected your letter immediately. It is possible that I may get it before you get this. Describe all your experiences, what you learnt from other women, the thoughts which came to you, the books which you read, etc., etc. How was your health [in jail]? Did you learn any Marathi? Could you keep up your energy of body and mind on the food that you were getting? I have had no letter from Nanibehn. Why is that so? We are all very well.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9331. Also C.W. 5076. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] In 1930-31

433. LETTER TO PREMLILA THACKERSEY

August 23, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I got your letter and the copy of Sir Vithaldas's[1] biography. I will go through it.

All three of us keep good health, as usual.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati C.W. 4823. Courtesy Premlila Thackersey

434. LETTER TO DARBARI SADHU[2]

August 23, 1932

It does not seem correct to me to say that it is part of man's nature to spend some time in idle thoughts. If there is a single exception to this, we cannot say that it is part of man's nature to do so. Actually, we find many exceptions. It is true that vast numbers of people are always busy thinking about all manner of things which they will do or will not do, and thus may be said to spend time in idle thoughts. If this were not so, it would not be necessary to emphasize the importance of concentration. What is important for us at present is this. We ourselves make all kinds of plans and resolutions, most of which we do not even remember after some time. All such thoughts are mental incontinence. Just as man dissipates his physical strength through ordinary incontinence, so he dissipates his mental strength through

[1] Addressee's husband

[2] The addressee had said in his letter that "aimless thoughts were certainly burdensome but it seemed as if even the seeker after truth had to pass through the stage of wandering thoughts It was true that selfless action purified the mind But after some purification had not the seeker quietly to observe his mental activity? Or was the selfless action sufficient in itself? Buddha recommended a combination of activity and contemplation with some such end in view. Bapu however was all for action, which according to him was the royal road to self-perfection. But did it enable the seeker to understand the activity of the soul?" (*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol I, pp. 304-5).

mental incontinence, and, as physical weakness affects the mind, so mental weakness affects the body. That is why I have defined *brahmacharya* in a wide sense and described even idle thoughts as violation of it. By defining *brahmacharya* in a narrow sense, we have made it more difficult to observe If we accept its wider definition and try to control all the eleven organs[1], the control of the one most important organ would be much easier. You seem to believe in the heart of your hearts that physical activity prevents or hinders us from watching the progress of our inward purification. My experience is the opposite of this. Without inward purification, work cannot be done in a spirit of non-attachment. Hence the degree of inward purification can be judged mainly by the purity of our work Anybody who tries to cultivate inward purity without doing work will more likely than not be in danger of falling into a delusion. I have seen many such instances. I will give an ordinary example. I have known many co-workers making all kinds of good resolutions in jail, and also seen their resolutions broken at the first blow after they were released In jail they were quite sure that they would never swerve from their resolutions, that they had achieved inward purification, that they had examined themselves in complete peace of mind and that they had acquired concentration in prayer. But I found that the moment they were outside the jail walls all this evaporated into thin air. The fifth verse of Chapter III of the *Gita* states a profound truth. Scientist after scientist has told us that the principle enunciated in it is a universal law. It simply means that no human being can cease from karma even for a moment Karma or motion is the universal law of all material things and forms of life Man's spiritual knowledge and his excellence lie in obeying it in a spirit of non-attachment There are two verses in the *Ishopanishad*[2] which state the same truth, and they are equally profound. Who am I to criticize a great soul like the Buddha? Besides, I love and revere him. But did he himself set up the organization [of monasteries] or did his followers do so? Whoever did it, the monasteries which were established became, in obedience to this universal law, stagnant and by and by acquired reputation as dens of sloth. Even today we find Buddhist monks in Ceylon, Burma and Tibet sunk in ignorance and the veritable images of sloth In India, too, the monks known as sannyasis are not found to be shining specimens of humanity.

[1] Five organs of perception, five of action and the mind
[2] Verses 1 and 2

Personally I am convinced, therefore, that man can achieve real and enduring purification of heart only through work. I again feel tempted to quote the *Gita*. Verse 18 of Chapter IV means that he who sees action in inaction and inaction in action is the wise man, he is the true yogi and the true man of karma. I have, however, explained here what I have found in my own experience I have quoted the *Gita* verses because I have found the truth of their teaching in my experience. I never quote anything from Shastras which I have not tested in experience The experience of others may be different from mine and they may even quote verses from the *Gita* which tend in the opposite direction or they may quote in support of their experience the same verses which I do and interpret them differently. All this is possible. I, therefore, never insist that all people should accept my experience as the sole guide.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, pp. 378-80

435. LETTER TO NANI AND OTHERS

August 24, 1932

MY DEAR LITTLE FRIENDS, NANI[1], ANNA[2], GILLIAN[3] AND LYDIA[4],

I was delighted to have your sweet notes with funny drawings made by you. You do not mind my sending one note for all of you. After all you are all one in mind though not in body Yes, it is little children like you who will stop all war This means that you never quarrel with other boys and girls or among yourselves. You can't stop big wars, if you carry on little wars yourselves.

How I wish I was with you to celebrate Nani's and Anna's birthday. May God bless them and bless you all My kisses to you all, if you will let me kiss you and Nani will pass on my love to Esther. Won't she?

BAPU

From a photostat No 2 Courtesy National Archives of India

[1] & [2] Son and daughter of Esther Menon

[3] & [4] Children whom Gandhiji had met in Selly Oak at the time of the Round Table Conference in 1931

436. LETTER TO PREMIBEHN JAIRAMDAS

August 24, 1932

MY DEAR PREMI[1],

I was glad to have your letter. As you make no reference to the Koran, it must have been sent by someone else. It came with your boxes. It is not that Sardar does not like the sweets you sent. But he did not want to eat them while here. It was for that reason that both the boxes were sent to Sarojini Devi. When will you learn Hindi? Tell me all about Father. We are all well.

Our love to Mother, Arjun[2] and yourself.

Yours,
BAPU

SHRI PREMIBEHN
PREMBHAVAN
MARKET ROAD
HYDERABAD, SIND

From a photostat C.W. 9243. Courtesy: Jairamdas Doulatram

437. LETTER TO GOVINDDAS

August 24, 1932

We read from the papers about your wife's illness. May God restore her to sound health. Sardar and Mahadev are with me, and we often remember you.

The Bombay Chronicle, 31-8-1932

[1] Daughter of Jairamdas Doulatram
[2] Addressee's brother

438. LETTER TO HARI-ICHCHHA S. KAMDAR

August 24, 1932

CHI. HARI-ICHCHHA[1],

Won't you mind if I did not write to you for five months? I did not expect that you would be so lazy, and you do not even write your full address, so that I have to send my letter *via* the Ashram. Now give up your laziness. What was wrong with your health? Write to me in detail about Rasik[2] after meeting him. Which school do Tara and Vasant attend?

Sardar Vallabhbhai and Mahadevbhai are with me.

How do you spend your day? Do you read anything or spin?

Have you got acquainted with Raihanabehn? How are your eyes?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7470. Also C.W. 4916. Courtesy. Hari-ichchha S. Kamdar

439. LETTER TO RUKMINIDEVI BAZAJ

August 24, 1932

CHI. RUKMINI,

I got your letter, as also Radha's. Try and get back the weight which you have lost. It was good that you went to see Devdas.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. BENARSIDAS
K 23/96 PANCHGANGA
BENARES CITY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9140

[1] Niece of Valji G. Desai

[2] Addressee's brother

440. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

August 24, 1932

CHI. MANUDI,

I got your letter. Why do you still cry sometimes for Harilal? We should pray to God for his welfare. You must write to me regularly. I hope you do not display temper now, and pay proper attention to study. This time your handwriting was bad. I hope all the children of Ramibehn are in good health now.

Blessings from

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W 1515. Courtesy Manubehn Mashruwala

441. LETTER TO BALIBEHN VORA

August 24, 1932

CHI. BALI,

I got your letter after a long time. Please overcome your laziness in this matter. You must refuse to pay bills in Harilal's name which you may receive. I hear that he is somewhere in Ahmedabad My hope of his reforming is becoming dim day by day. All of us, he and we, are in God's hands.

The pain in my elbow is not much to worry about.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C.W. 1516. Courtesy. Manubehn Mashruwala

442. LETTER TO NIRMALA B. MASHRUWALA

August 24, 1932

CHI. NIRMALA,

I got your letter. I have been getting proofs of *Gitamanthan*. I have got the proofs of Chapters X to XIII, but the proofs of the last are not complete. Why have the proofs of the earlier chapters been not sent to me? When were these chapters written and who reads the proofs? When is the book expected to be published? Who keeps Gomati[1] company? How does she spend the day? And now the reply to Kishorelal's letter. I have not yet been able to take up *Gandhi Vichar Dohan*[2]. Just now my correspondence is rather heavy, and it has become very much more so after Dr. Mehta's death I have to write many letters to give what advice I can from here and get the necessary information for the purpose, and that leaves very little time for other things. I do not wish to overstrain myself or cut down on sleep to do anything. I do not even sacrifice for any work the short midday nap which I need. I can, therefore, read only during the time which is left after attending to other necessary things. During that time I read a little from the Upanishads and go through books on astronomy. This week I have not been able to read any Urdu book, though till now I could give some time at least for its study every day. The history[3] of the Ashram is almost complete, but I have had to keep it aside for some time. If the predictions of the astrologers come true, all my plans would be in a mess. But the planets betray them time and again, and, therefore, as we all go on working without thinking of death, I go on working unmindful of their predictions. In fact all three of us go on working. Nobody has sent me the book on health as yet. If I get it, I would go through it at the earliest opportunity. There is every likelihood of my making some changes in it. Experiments for improving spinning are going on very well. Mahadev spins yarn of 80 counts and Sardar has reached 40 counts. He will reach a still higher figure. The two spin on the Gandiva spinning-wheel and I spin on the Magan spinning-wheel. I can spin yarn of 30 counts on it, and

[1] Addressee's mother
[2] By Kishorelal Mashruwala
[3] *Vide* pp 188-236

446. LETTER TO BEGUM

DEAR SISTER,

I was very glad to get your le
Doctor Saheb. It was only yester
dress. I hope that Doctor Saheb
Please convey to him *vandematara*
myself. We are all doing well by
will find no difficulty in decipheri

From a photostat of the Urdu G.N.

447. LETTER TO KU

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I got your letter. I had told y
in which you had answered my q
he work when I got the other let
which are to be published. I th
them. Your hesitation has made
lal's bond with you as revealed i
ed, his letters by themselves wil
done only on the basis of the fa
I have gathered in conversations
evealed in the letters. The ta
an I had thought. But I will t
am in no mood to take up such
acle in my path. Ultimately, G
has willed.

From a photostat of the Gujarati:

Sanskrit is progressing
ying at present Part VI
that, he studies five
plenty of time to this
learning Kannada. It
ie same, a good deal of
out that when we have
at after we have learnt
trouble, for we discover
iave read all the proofs
liked the language. He
of the original. I have
changes in the book, for
so. I have thought it
which Kishorelal has
no change in the condi-
io trouble. All three of

Blessings from
BAPU

2884. Courtesy Nirmalabehn

AL JHAVERI

August 24, 1932

or your letter, but at last
rs from all. Chhaganlal's
ki[1], Manekbai[2] and Ratilal
tion about him. From
e no reason for distrusting
me direct questions. If it
aave to go to Rangoon. As
in this. I have received
r if you hear anything or
, please do not hesitate to
ess is rather delicate. Let us

[1] Wife of Dr. Mohammad Alam
[2] Dr. Alam was in Lahore Centra
ivan Mehta and wife of Manilal

hope that Doctor's *punya*[1] will work and everything will be all right.

I am not writing to Manjula, thinking that she must have returned by now. I wrote one letter to her at Jetpur. Letters for Gulab, Maganlal and Tilak are enclosed.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C.W. 5043. Courtesy: Dhirubhai Jhaveri

444. LETTER TO GULAB

August 24, 1932

CHI. GULAB,

What happened so that you required change of air for such a long time? Write to me in detail. I hope you have completely recovered now. Do you hear from Dhirubhai? Does Neelam write to you any time? How are they both getting along? How is Tilak? Do you feel any inconvenience because of him?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photosat of the Gujarati C.W. 5047. Courtesy: Dhirubhai Jhaveri

445. LETTER TO BENARSILAL BAZAJ

August 24, 1932

CHI. BENARSI,

I have your letter. I got a letter from Father saying that someone had written to him of my displeasure with you people and that it had caused him great pain. I have replied[2] to him that you have never given me any cause for displeasure. Who could have given him such wrong information?

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. BENARSIDAS
K. 23/96 PANCHGANGA
BENARES CITY

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9140. Also C.W. 9450. Courtesy: Benarsilal Bazaj

[1] Merit earned through goodness
[2] *Vide* "Letter to Rameshwarlal Bazaj", p. 382.

446. LETTER TO BEGUM MOHAMMAD ALAM[1]

August 24, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

I was very glad to get your letter. I did get the letter from Doctor Saheb. It was only yesterday I learnt from it your address. I hope that Doctor Saheb is better.[2] Keep me informed. Please convey to him *vandemataram* from Sardar, Mahadev and myself. We are all doing well by the grace of God. I hope you will find no difficulty in deciphering this letter.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Urdu G N 25

447. LETTER TO KUSUMBEHN DESAI

August 25, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I got your letter. I had told you in my letter in reply to yours, in which you had answered my questions, that I would take up the work when I got the other letters. "The other" means those which are to be published. I think it necessary to go through them. Your hesitation has made my work difficult. Unless Harilal's bond with you as revealed in his letters is properly explained, his letters by themselves will have no value. That can be done only on the basis of the facts set out by you, those which I have gathered in conversations from you and those which are revealed in the letters. The task is going to be more difficult than I had thought. But I will try to do justice to it. At present I am in no mood to take up such work. That is certainly an obstacle in my path. Ultimately, God will let me do only what He has willed.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1845

[1] Wife of Dr. Mohammad Alam

[2] Dr. Alam was in Lahore Central Jail and was ailing.

448. LETTER TO MAHALAKSHMI M. THAKKAR

August 25, 1932

CHI. MAHALAKSHMI,

I had got the letter which you wrote before leaving the jail. Before you get this letter, I expect to get your letter describing all your experiences [in jail]. Also give all the news you may have heard about the children, and tell me what you read and thought while in jail. Let me know whether you were comfortable in the company of so many women and how they used to behave. Give me any news about Madhavji[1] that you may have heard.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 6820

449. LETTER TO TARA N. MASHRUWALA

August 25, 1932

CHI. TARA,

I got your letter. It is of course the ideal thing to follow the rules applicable to the lowest class. But although following the rules applicable to 'C' class prisoners, we should try to secure, if we can, whatever food is necessary for our health. Many 'C' class prisoners get milk, etc. This need not cause any surprise. If we can secure such food without sacrificing our self-respect, it should be welcome; but if we do not get it, we should do without it and not feel unhappy. The regular practice of writing a daily diary, even in the fewest possible words, cures many undesirable habits in us. For a person who wishes to live truthfully, a daily diary serves as a sentinel. Now that you have decided to keep such a diary, cling to your resolution. I hope no effect of the injury which you had received on the head is left now.

It was expected that the creation of classes [of political prisoners] would give rise to jealousies. The only thing we can do

[1] Addressee's husband

is to remain unaffected by them and to forgo as far as possible the privileges accorded to the higher classes.

What is wrong with Nanabhai's health? Manilal and Sushila wrote to me also. Manilal is in some trouble. He says that he did not get on well with Pragji. Perhaps people know about this there.

Nirmala writes to me occasionally and gives news about Kishorelal and Gomati.

Please write to me from time to time.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

All three of us are quite well. Perhaps you do not know that Sardar is studying Sanskrit with great energy. He also spins yarn of 40 counts. Mahadev has reached 80 counts.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7521. Also C.W. 4997. Courtesy: Kanubhai Mashruwala

450. LETTER TO MAHENDRA V. DESAI

August 25, 1932

CHI. MANU,

A boy who laughs during prayers may not be called mad, but he certainly lacks manners. What ticket do you mean? Human beings are given names so that people may recognize them. If no name were given to you, how would anybody call out to you if he wanted you from among other boys?

If one does not make use of what one learns, one might as well have not learnt anything.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. C.W. 7436. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

451. LETTER TO BHAU PANSE

August 26, 1932

CHI. BHAU,

It was a good thing that you sent me Vinoba's interpretation of those verses. We have no ground for believing that that was the author's meaning. But as I have explained in the preface to *Anasaktiyoga*[1], the utterances of poets go on acquiring ever new and revolutionary meanings, and that is as it should be. Vinoba has every right to interpret the verses as he has done. If, however, you are not satisfied with his interpretation, think over the meaning which I have given.[2] If even that does not satisfy you, you may give the verses any meaning which appeals to your reason provided it is not contrary to the chief aim of the *Gita*. And if you cannot do even that, you should leave the verses as ones which you cannot understand just now. If they do not yield a satisfactory meaning, that will not hinder your study of the *Gita*. Your daily programme of work is good. But there is no provision for rest in it. You should frame a programme which will help you to get over your headaches. For that, you should stop all work, except what you do as *yajna*, and take rest. You should lie down and put a mud-pack on your head. If you do this for one week, your headaches are bound to disappear. Also the pills given by Dr. Talwalkar will produce their effect. Headache is not a disease by itself, but is a symptom of some other disease or a warning that something is coming. If you take rest for a few days now, it will save you from a long rest afterwards. Reduce your reading. You have provided the time from 5.45 a.m. to 6.30 a.m., 9.15 a m. to 10.30 a.m., and 11.45 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. for study of the *Gita* and reading of newspapers. You may stop both for the time being and take rest at that time. If that does not give you relief, reduce carpentry work a little. You should regard it as your moral duty to banish this disease and should try to do so by every possible means.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6735. Also C.W. 4478 Courtesy: Bhau Panse

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLI.

[2] *Vide* p 366.

452. LETTER TO PADMA

August 26, 1932

CHI. PADMA,

This letter is meant only for you. You complain that I do not write to you, but I wrote several letters. Narandas has sent to me the statement of expenditure received from you. In it you have simply mentioned Rs 30 as miscellaneous expenses. This is not correct. You should give details. The expenditure seems to have exceeded even the figure mentioned by Sitala Sahay in his letter to me. Be careful in spending money. Send details of the miscellaneous expenses. In my previous letter[1], I asked you to give a description of the new place and Sarojinidevi's and your daily programme of work. I want Sheila's too. What are her toys and games? How much has she grown? What is her height—how many feet and inches? Does she learn anything?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6136 Also C.W. 3488 Courtesy: Prabhudas Gandhi

453. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

August 26, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. I hope you do not exhibit different virtues from time to time in order to win from me the praise which they deserve. If you do that my praise will lose all its value.[2]

You will not see anywhere else the fierce hatreds which you see in Kathiawar. I am not, therefore, surprised that you saw an exhibition of them too. Such exhibitions take place there without any preparation. A person like . . . is likely to get frozen by an exhibition of such hatreds, but it is strange that though . . . lives in Rajkot she could not remove . . .'s depression.

[1] *Vide* pp 365-6.

[2] The names in the following two paragraphs have been omitted.

I am sure she must have tied on his wrist the customary *raksha* on the Balev Day. But were they satisfied with a *raksha* of hand-spun yarn? It ought not to be beyond . . .'s strength to discover the cause of . . .'s unhappiness and remove it. . . . used to adore his wife, ... My belief is that, though married, they observed *brahmacharya*. . . .'s passing away was a great shock to . . . . Perhaps deep down in his heart . . . wishes to marry. He cannot understand his own condition. But . . . should have as wife a girl with the same ideals as his own. Failing to get such a wife, if he gets a sister with strong idealism in her character, . . . may perhaps blossom out. I have supposed . . . to be a perfect *brahmacharini*. She cherishes friendship for . . ., and has idealism in her character. Since you wrote about . . .'s depression, I have been tempted to write this. If you think that I have understood . . .'s character correctly and that what I have suggested is not beyond her strength, you may safely send this letter to her. If you feel that this is beyond her strength or that it is not her work, you may ignore this part of the letter. . . . craves for pure love. But . . . is full of likes and dislikes. He can love very few persons and so remains discontented within himself all the time. Such a person feels little need for a wife. But [,if married,] he can remain absorbed in his wife. He must get the sisterly love of a woman who is free from passion. If . . . gets such a sister, his life will take a new turn.

Women in our society do not try to cultivate this virtue. They know how to be good wives, but do not know how to be good sisters. In order to be a good sister, one requires great capacity for renunciation. It seems self-evident to me that a wife can never be a perfect sister. A woman can be a true sister to the whole world. A wife can surrender herself only to one person. The capacity to be a good wife is a useful virtue, but it does not have to be cultivated, for a wife's relation to her husband permits the satisfaction of physical desire. It is extremely difficult to cultivate the virtue required in one who would be a sister to the whole world. Only a woman for whom *brahmacharya* is a natural state and in whom the spirit of service has become the strongest impulse of her life can become that. . . . has not given me the impression that she has risen so far, but I certainly believe that she has the capacity to rise so high. Maybe you have been instrumental in creating this impression in me. I have now said everything which I felt about this matter. I have indeed been striving to make you such a sister. It is a difficult task. Let the result be as God wills it.

You have given a good description of the exhibition. Your descriptions are always interesting to read and make one think.

You did right in returning to the Ashram for the Janmashtami festival. See that you overcome your anger. Do you know that Dhiru was simply not ready to go with you? Don't get angry with him at any time. He is a child; you are not. If you win over Dhiru, it will be your victory; if you fail to do so, it will be your defeat.

Is there any test by which to judge whether a father and a mother are cultured? Who can say what the parents' state of mind was at the time of conception? I think, therefore, that it is best to cling to the rule that what is good bears good fruit. If we cannot prove the truth of this rule in every individual case, the reason may be our ignorance and not the inadequacy of the rule.

Even if I did[1] believe in Fate, its decrees could not be altered. Fate means the effect of past karma.

For saving the prostitutes from their profession, it is necessary that men should cease to be beasts. As long as we have beast-like men in the world, so long shall we have prostitutes If any prostitutes give up their profession and turn a new leaf in their lives, the so-called "respectable" men will certainly come forward to marry them. It is not true that once a prostitute, always a prostitute.

The belief that in every country girls are abducted for the army seems exaggerated to me. In a well-governed country this cannot happen.

It is not correct to believe that residents of the Malabar coast can digest coconut even after they have left the air of that place. By mixing coconut with *tandalja*, you weakened the effect of *tandalja*. I have often included coconut in my diet. It didn't agree with me. But it is highly probable that it is essential with other articles of food in regions where it grows.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 10300. Also C.W. 5747 Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

[1] The addressee explains in *Bapuna Patro–5. Ku Premabehn Kantakne* that she had asked Gandhiji whether he believed in Fate, and thinks that the reply should read. "Even if I did not believe in Fate . . . ".

454. LETTER TO RAMCHANDRA N. KHARE

August 26, 1932

CHI. RAMBHAU,

Was the Hindi of your letter your own or did you write it with Parasramji's help? The handwriting was good. If the Hindi was your own, it was good. I hope to get a detailed description of the Janmashtami celebration.

A few sentences in English will give me some idea of your progress in that language.

BAPU

[PS.]

The "Om" which you have carved is good enough, but I don't think it is clear enough to be recognizable. How much time did it take you to carve it?

BAPU

From Gujarati C.W. 296. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

455. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

August 26, 1932

How is it that you have not written to anybody since your imprisonment?[1] A prisoner is surely entitled to write a letter immediately after he or she is brought to a jail. Do write now if you have not written any letter so far. If you can, improve your health this time. Do not hesitate to ask for or eat whatever food is necessary [for your health].

I would advise you to draw up a regular plan of study in jail and master the subjects in which you are weak at present. For instance, study Gujarati grammar carefully and acquire better command over the language. You know English and can, therefore, improve your proficiency in it too. You may take Kamaladevi's[2] help for that. Lilavatibehn[3] can help you in Sanskrit.

[1] The addressee was arrested on August 11, 1932, and sentenced to 15 months.

[2] Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya

[3] Lilavati Munshi

Improve your Marathi too. You should also learn something about matters which specially concern women. But all this is only a suggestion. If you do not like all these items, you may select whichever you like. If you do not like any of them, select something else of your own choice. I only want that you should fully utilize this precious opportunity for increasing your knowledge. Spinning, if permitted by the rules, prayers and keeping a diary—you must not omit any of these things.

All three of us are quite well. Father is studying Sanskrit with a speed which would astonish you. He is never found without a book in his hands. No young man is likely to show greater enthusiasm than he does. He also spins yarn of up to 40 counts, and makes envelopes. Mahadev spins yarn of up to 80 counts, besides studying French and Urdu. I spin on the Magan wheel, but rather slowly. My study also is slow. Correspondence takes up a lot of my time. . . .[1]

If you feel like writing to me any time and can include a letter to me in the number of letters permitted to you, do write.

Blessings from us all.

BAPU

MANIBEHN PATEL
PRISONER
BELGAUM

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-4: Manibehn Patelne, pp 85-6

456. *LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR*

August 26/27, 1932

CHI. KAKA,

After a long time and through Col. Doyle's kindness I got a letter from you, dated 1[6-8-1932][2]. The Colonel also told me today that you must have reached Ahmedabad today, and added that you should give up spinning, too, for some time in order to get rid of the pain in your back. I promised to convey this to you and to advise you to give up spinning as long as the pain persists. You should, therefore, give up spinning for some time. If you can spin on the *takli* standing and without getting tired, as you used to do here, you may do so, but you need not do even

[1] Some lines were censored by the jail authorities.

[2] Illegible in the source

that. The only thing which I insist on your doing just now is to improve your health and get strong. Do get the area on the back where you feel the pain in the bone gently massaged. It is very good indeed that you can bathe with cold water. (Please let me know who are the other people with you there) . . .[1]

I am writing to Hiralal about the book on astronomy. He has already sent me three of the books in your list. They are as follows *Stellar Maps*, *Khagolchitram* and *Hindu Astronomy*. I am sending them with this There is some history behind *Khagolchitram*. It was torn when it arrived here. . . .[2] I shall soon be having a fairly good collection of books on astronomy. There are three books by Jeans which are worth reading. If you have not read them, would you like me to send any of them? Hiralal has sent me Maeterlink's book at your suggestion. I got it only two or three days ago Since it was sent at your suggestion, you must have read it of course. If you want it, however, please let me know and I will send it too. I can easily recognize the morning constellations whose names you have given. You used to tell me names of many constellations but at that time they were only names to me. Now I can recognize most of them. I am able to read something at least every day. I have glanced through the chapters you have written. Though I have not read them carefully, I observed one deficiency in them. I felt, after reading a short sketch of Sir William Hershel's life in Ball's *Story of the Sky*, that you should give the names and short lives of Western astronomers, some of whom, as you yourself say, were men of great courage and spirit and of noble character. A modest effort to do this was made in *Jyotirvilas*. The book on astronomy which we wish to publish should be as perfect as possible and should give an account of all discoveries to date in the field. After reading the books of Jeans, I also feel that the book should give some knowledge about physics. This means that the scope of your undertaking becomes a little wider. I have merely thrown out a suggestion here. I don't expect you to do all this while you are resting there. Perhaps it is beyond your capacity, and so I do not wish to analyse your chapters too critically. Moreover, the book should not be such as only highly educated persons can understand. It should be written with villagers in view. But you should attach more importance to your health than to even this undertaking. You should go on with the work only if you can improve your health at the same time and not at its cost.

[1&2] Two-and-a-half lines were censored by the jail authorities.

How is it possible that I would not know Pundalik[1]? I don't think he is likely to have accompanied you there. The disease from which he is suffering is an awful one. I have no other remedy to suggest for it except fasting, cold hip-baths and enemas. The lower intestines will recover their normal position only if they are given complete rest. Pundalik's complaint is known as prolapsus of the rectum. The effect of enema will be that the faeces will be expelled by the force of the water without the rectum slipping out. And since he will be fasting, the intestines will have no work to do and the rectum will not then slip out.

I think you will get this letter without much delay. Vallabhbhai's study of Sanskrit is progressing with the speed of Indra's horse. As soon as spinning is over, he picks up a book of Sanskrit. He has completed six parts of Satavlekar's series and two chapters of the *Gita*. He does five verses every day. He becomes equally absorbed in spinning. He has reached as far as 40 counts. I don't think any student of the Vidyapith can equal his capacity for hard work. Mahadev's study of French and Urdu is progressing. He has reached as far as 80 counts. I had gone as far as 53 counts on the Gandiva spinning-wheel, but I have gone back to the Magan spinning-wheel to prevent harm to the left elbow. I have not been able to rise above 30 counts on it. In addition to astronomy, I also study Urdu a little. Correspondence takes up a great deal of time. After Dr. Mehta's death, I have had to write numerous letters concerning the affairs of his family. I suppose you have heard about his death. He had got a cut in a foot with a piece of glass and the wound became septic. The leg had to be amputated. The operation was successful, but afterwards he developed double pneumonia which proved fatal. This is the fourth week since he died.

Maganlal (Dr. Mehta's) must have landed in Bombay today. He had gone to England. . . .[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

August 27, 1932

. . .[3] I had almost completed the history of the Ashram. After revising what I had written, I was about to proceed further but had to leave the work aside. I have not been able to find time for it since then. I am trying to do so. I have not been

[1] Pundalik Katagde, follower of Gangadharrao Deshpande
[2] Seven-and-a-quarter lines were censored by the jail authorities.
[3] The first line was censored by the jail authorities.

able to write it in as much detail as you may have thought. I believe, however, that it will contain my views in brief on all matters.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9488. Courtesy: D. B. Kalelkar

457. LETTER TO SULOCHANA

August 27, 1932

CHI. SULOCHANA,

I got your letter. You seem to have made good progress. Learn carding as soon as you can. You make mistakes in your letters. You should form the habit of going through a letter after writing it. Get your letters revised by somebody. With a little effort, you will also be able to improve your handwriting.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1737

458. LETTER TO VIMALA JOSHI

August 27, 1932

CHI. VIMU,

Your handwriting is indeed very bad and yet I like your letter. Now see that your eyes are cured soon. What is wrong with them? It would be very good if you will now settle down in the Ashram.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5311

459. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

August 27, 1932

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I got your letter. You have been long enough in the Ashram now. I had expected from you a report of your observations without my asking for it, but I have received none till this day. Rama did send hers, though it was a short one, and secured a long letter from me in reply. You will, no doubt, read it. I

want a detailed report from you. I do not mind whether it is favourable or unfavourable, so long as it gives your sincere impressions.

Do not neglect [the condition of] Vimu's eyes.[1] A disease of the eye should be treated as soon as its earliest symptoms are observed. Does Vimu still love mischief as much as she used to, or has she become a little more serious? It would be a good thing if Dhiru also comes over. How did he spend his time?

Did you go and see the Vidyapith library? What is the matter with Amina? Did you visit the grave?

I am sure you must have called on Punjabhai. He is nearing the end, it seems

Shankar met me. He seems to be repenting for what he did.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 5506

460. LETTER TO CHAMPABEHN R. MEHTA

August 27, 1932

CHI. CHAMPA,

I got all your letters. I have received a copy of Doctor's instructions. He has not signed the document, but I believe the instructions will be carried out. Why do you worry? I can never abandon you. You may, if you choose, reject my advice, and if you do so it will not hurt me. I can only try to act as your father but Prabhashankar is your real father and it would be but natural if you prefer his advice to mine. In this matter, however, you should use your reason as much as possible. If it does not help you, you should naturally follow the advice of your father. I am of course making efforts to see if Prabhashankar and I can agree. But I have not been able to understand him. I do not like, or do not understand, some of his ways. Some of his views seem devious to me. I am trying to persuade him to change his attitude. I will write to him. If we can agree, there will be no problem for you. But even if we do not agree, you need not worry. Who can rob you of what is yours? Have faith in God. You are not yet being asked to do anything. Have pa-

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

tience and wait. Look after the children. I hope those of them who were ill are all right now.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N. 8754. Also C.W. 1622. Courtesy: Champabehn R. Mehta

461. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN RANA

August 27, 1932

CHI. NARMADA,

You seem to be very greedy. You have only one letter to write, and so you write a long one. I have many letters to write. How much time would it take me if I made them long? But I like your being greedy.

I say in every letter all that I wish to say. You should improve your handwriting. Keep some space between lines and words.

If you remain firm and courteous, all your relatives will come round.

It is best to speak very little. I suppose you have obtained Narayandas's permission for observing silence. Who teaches you Gujarati?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. C W. 2761 Courtesy: Ramnarayan N. Pathak

462. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

August 27, 1932

CHI. SHARDA,

Your letters are always nice. The summary of Rajaji's discourse which you have sent me is good.

I know why you are having pain in the back. Find it out from my letter to Anandi and then write more about it.

Why are the slivers not up to the mark? Why don't you tell Narandasbhai about it?

BAPU

From the Gujarati original. C W. 9916. Courtesy Shardabehn G Chokhawala

463. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI[1]

August 25/28, 1932

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got on Tuesday the mail posted by you. Parvati's[2] letter moves one to pity. If Budhabhai[3] will not listen, what can you do? I am intentionally not writing to Parvati. Comfort her as much as you can. When you wish me to write to both or one of them, I will do so.

I see from Kusum's letter that you have to carry a fairly heavy burden of work these days. Whatever the demands of work, you should take enough sleep and snatch at least half an hour's rest in the afternoon. It is good that Rajaji has come over as also Mirabehn. I felt very happy. Why is it necessary for Amina to avoid milk, ghee and sugar? What is she suffering from? I expect the women there look after her properly. I hope you had understood that the letter for Ba[4] which I sent last week was to be delivered to her after she was released. I had got an impression that she was to be released in a day or two. Will Parvati Patki now live in Khamgaon permanently? It was rather amusing that you did not easily follow what I had written about the letter from Italy.[5] That happens sometimes.

If we can now spin fine yarn, the spinning-wheels, spindles and slivers are much more responsible for success than our own effort. Now that all of us are trying to spin yarn of fine count, there should be no slivers of inferior quality in the Ashram. Does every spinner use slivers made by himself, or do the slivers get mixed up? I think if everyone would spin with his own slivers, the quality of carding would improve very much. If we make fine yarn as defined by us the centre round which everything else should revolve, every process from the sowing of cotton seeds to the weaving of the cloth is bound to become perfect. We shall then have to evolve the best quality seeds, improve the soil, look

[1] The article "Action—Thoughtful and Thoughtless", 28-8-1932, was sent along with this letter; *vide* pp. 436-7.

[2] & [3] A couple who had come to live near the Ashram

[4] *Vide* p. 391.

[5] *Vide* p. 371.

to the quality of the manure, pay careful attention to the manner of separating the cotton from the pods, and so on. Fine yarn means yarn uniformly of not less than 40 counts, which would stand comparison with good mill yarn of the same count and from which a weaver can weave cloth with ease. I chose the figure of 40 in this definition because it is possible to spin yarn of lower count than that with some effort from slivers of inferior quality, but not yarn of 40 counts. Please let me know what inconvenience you think one feels in the posture in which one has to sit for spinning on the Gandiva spinning-wheel. According to me, one of the many excellences of this wheel is that you can spin on it while sitting in any position. One can sit on a chair or a stool, put the spinning-wheel on a box or a bench and spin. You can keep it to your left or right, or even in front. When travelling in a train, I put it on the same berth on which I sit and spin. There will be no harm if Chhakkaddas's slivers arrive after some time. If you have not sent Keshu's slivers before you send Chhakkaddas's, you may send the two together with a sign to identify Keshu's. What is the count of the yarn which Abbas spins? Please let me know the length and circumference of his spindle. You need not worry if you cannot spin yarn of more than 20–22 counts. I would be satisfied with the quality of yarn that you can spin with the best slivers and the thinnest spindle.

I did not receive the Anantapur report even during this week. Who has signed the receipt which you have got? You may tell Parasram what you consider necessary. Why did Pyarelal leave in such haste? Padma must send details of miscellaneous expenses. Read the letter[1] which I have written to her. What you have written to Mahavir's uncle is quite correct. I was glad to learn that Jivanlal's brother's wife had come there. Has she had any education?

Your question about the Dattatreya temple is good. I don't look upon the shrine as a temple. I think that it is a form of a *samadhi*[2]. In any case, it cannot be used as a public temple. I am also not inclined to make it a private temple, though it seems to me that, if somebody goes and worships at the shrine, he cannot be forbidden. Please find out and let me know what Panditji believes and what he desires that we should do. Has any issue been raised about this matter just now?

[1] *Vide* p. 422

[2] A structure over a place where a body is buried or cremated

Who wrote to you and suggested that some amount should be kept with Trivedi[1]? There are now very few women left in the jail here. Trivedi would not like our keeping any such amount with him. If, however, you think it necessary, you may do that with his consent. I don't see any necessity of it. If at any time we specially require something, we can write to the Ashram, and, if we require it urgently, I would feel no hesitation even in obtaining it from Trivedi. Probably Ramabehn, Vasumati and others are there now. Know their views also.

Read my letter to Liladhar. Do only what you think right. Whose idea was the exhibition at Rajkot? Was the entire burden on Jamnadas?

August 26, 1932

If the discharge from Manjula's ear persists, consult Dr. Talwalkar and try the remedy which he advises. Ask Agam Giri a straight question, whether he is dissatisfied in any way with the Giri family, or whether he has any suggestion to make. Does Mahavir write to you regularly? To me he does not When he had complaints to make, he wrote frequently enough.

August 27, 1932

Kaka has been transferred to the prison there. Apply for permission to see him. I have written to Ba directly this time I don't believe that she can have lost 16 pounds of weight. If she lost so much weight, she would become a mere skeleton. Have you seen her? Make a more careful inquiry. How much milk does she consume? What other food does she eat?

Send to the Superintendent by registered post the postal acknowledgement for the registration of the Anantapur report. Keep with you a copy of the acknowledgement. When you send it, inform me too. I have still not got these papers

See my letter to Indu. There seems to be some estrangement between him on the one hand and Kanu, Mangala and Nirmala on the other. Please inquire what the matter is. Indu has become eager to learn English. Personally, I think it would be wise to let him occupy his mind in learning English if he studies nothing else.

I got your letter of the 25th posted separately. When you say four heads of cattle, do you mean cows or bullocks? What was

[1] Prof Jaishankar P Trivedi of Poona Agricultural College, who usually supplied the needs of the Ashram members lodged in the Yeravda Central Prison

the loss? What were the injections, and for what were they given? You did right in asking Narayanappa to leave. We have endured much from him. It seems that Bhagwanji was right in his judgment. But I don't believe that we made a mistake in trusting Narayanappa. A person in a responsible position ought not to disqualify anybody on someone's word, unless he is himself convinced. Our policy had this good result, that Narayanappa has now disqualified himself.

I hope Kusum is not nervous in the slightest degree. There is no reason at all to become nervous.

The ceremonial reading of holy works on the Janmashtami day was very well done. What is the number in the Ashram just now? How many are women, and how many men? How many are boys and girls under sixteen? And how many labourers?

August 28, 1932

Read Nimu's letter and persuade her to start eating ghee. Ramdas's argument is correct. There has been no change in my food — *bajri*, bananas, almonds, oranges and green vegetables. Constipation has disappeared completely. In other respects also the health is good. Even then, I will certainly start taking milk and see the effect. I want to find out whether *bajri* helps in preventing constipation in spite of my taking milk. I also see that green vegetables play a big part in helping complete evacuation.

Take the necessary steps immediately to see that the slivers made are of the finest quality. You need not worry if there is decrease in the quantity of slivers for some time, but pay your attention to ensuring that the work is neat and careful and the slivers are of the best quality, and that there is minimum waste.

There are 54 letters in all.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U /I Also C W. 8247 Courtesy. Narandas Gandhi

464. ACTION — THOUGHTFUL AND THOUGHTLESS[1]

August 28, 1932

I wrote about reading and reflection[2] Today I wish to say something about working and thinking. According to me, real education consists in learning the art of thinking. If we can master it, everything else will follow in beautiful order.

The woman in the story who, on seeing the face of the mongoose red with blood threw her pot of water at it, acted thoughtlessly, and repented afterwards for killing the creature which had saved the life of her son. She could not wipe the stain of this act from her mind for the whole of her life. The loss of the pot and the water are not even worth mentioning, so big was her crime.

This is an extreme illustration, but it serves to drive home the idea we are discussing. If we do all our work in the Ashram after careful thought, there would be more peace, our efficiency would increase, much time would be saved and we would find new interest in our work every day. We employ cattle for working the water-mill and the animal labours the whole day, but its knowledge does not increase and it feels no interest in its work. If there was none to goad it, the animal would not go round. But we are human beings. The [Gujarati] word *manas*[3] comes from *manushya*[4], and the latter means, literally, one who thinks, who knows. We ought not to live or act like animals.

We clean lavatories. If we don't think about it, we would feel the work to be low and degrading and eagerly wish that we could be saved from it. If, however, we think about it, we would realize that it was our moral duty to do it. To clean it means to make the place perfectly clean, to bury the contents of the bucket carefully, to keep in a clean condition the things with which we do the work, and to examine the contents. If there is any blood or the stink is very offensive or if there are worms, we may conclude that somebody is ill. We should then find out who that

[1] This was sent along with "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 25/28-8-1932; *vide* the preceding item.

[2] *Vide* pp 363-4 and 395

[3] & [4] Human being

person is. We would of course know who uses a lavatory. If, while cleaning it we discover that the stool is not properly covered with dust or a portion has fallen outside the bucket or that the urine has fallen outside it we should find out the guilty person and explain the matter politely to him. All this will be done only by a person who does the work in a spirit of service. This means that as we think daily more carefully about our work, it will be done better and more easily every day and cease to be boring and become interesting. I have not here examined the question of cleaning lavatories from every possible point of view. I have merely mentioned it by way of illustration.

Let us take another example, spinning for *yajna*. If we do this work with careful thought, we would enjoy it, too, immensely and there would be indefinite progress in the art of spinning. If everybody spun with careful thought, we would make many discoveries and spin yarn of the finest quality.

And the same is true about prayer. What is prayer? Why do we pray? Why do we observe silence? Why do we use prayers in Sanskrit, and not in Gujarati, Marathi or Hindi? We can think about these and many other questions and make our prayer a tremendous force, whereas it seems to me that we think the least about this subject.

The *Gita's* statement, "Yoga is skill in work"[1], is a profound thought. Yoga means union. Union with God is yoga. Mother *Gita* teaches that such union can be achieved without difficulty by skill in work. Anyone who aspires to cultivate such skill must become absorbed in the work and devote all his thought to it. Somebody who used to spin on the *takli* and applied his mind to the work made the important invention of the spinning-wheel, and somebody who used the spinning-wheel with careful thought invented a spinning-machine with thousands of spindles. According to me, that person exercised his intellect brilliantly, but did not use his heart. Hence, it is not enough that we should think. Our thinking should be for a good end and should be inspired by concern for dharma. However, in contrast to absence of thinking the power of intellect of the inventor of the spinning-machine certainly deserves to be admired

From a microfilm of the Gujarati M M U /II

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II 50

465. LETTER TO ELIZABETH F. HOWARD

August 28, 1932

DEAR SISTER,

You are quite right in addressing me as 'friend'! I continue to call you 'sister'. Perhaps it is more affectionate than 'friend'. But you may take whatever appeals to you as better.

It was good of you to have given me a brief description of your meeting. This fellowship[1] is a difficult thing It can come only through constant practice in all walks of life and among all the different races and nationalities.

I had read the letter you sent to Mahadev Desai. I have preserved the beautiful verses you had copied

Mahadev Desai wishes to be remembered to you.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat G N 863

466. LETTER TO SUNDERBEHN BHAGVAT

August 28, 1932

CHI. SUNDERBEHN[2],

I got your letter. All three of us send our blessings to you and Deshpande[3]. We hope that your union will be happy, that both of you will live long and devote yourselves completely to service Only then will your union be said to have justified itself.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 2169

[1] Presumably Fellowship of Reconciliation

[2] Now Sushilabai

[3] Pandurang Ganesh Deshpande

467. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

August 28, 1932

CHI. PARASRAM,

I got your small booklet of nine pages. I could hardly hold my sides with laughter. I remember to have laughed like this only once in my youth when I had drunk some bhang. But please do not conclude from this that you should go on sending amusing books. It is for you to teach the boys to say *sthira* or *khade ho* instead of "stop".[1] Under the intoxicating effect of your letter, I mix Hindi with Gujarati. I cannot explain from here how you can persuade the boys to do so. They must feel the power of your love and knowledge so that they will start using a Hindi or Urdu word for "stop". As you become more and more frank and loving and humble, those who are learning Hindi will increasingly come to love the language. Any boy or boys who acquire sufficient proficiency in Hindi to be able to teach it to small children may certainly be given charge of their class.

By showing that even Arjuna gets exhausted and that no one remains alive, the author of the *Mahabharata* has demonstrated the folly of armed war. The Lord's description of Himself in the *Gita* is put by the author in His mouth. In fact God is formless and speaks or does nothing. The question, then, is whether such words can be put in God's mouth. I feel that it can certainly be done. God is omnipotent and omniscient. Anything that an omniscient Being speaks is perfect truth, and therefore it cannot be described as boasting. Such description of himself by a human being would not be proper, since man cannot know his strength and power rightly. If, however, in reply to a question, a man gives his correct height, his doing so is not boasting but simple statement of truth. If a person who is five feet tall says that he is four feet tall, that is not humility on his part. It is either inexcusable ignorance or hypocrisy.

Lady Cat and her children are always enjoying themselves and

[1] This sentence is in Hindi

turn up at meal-times to claim their share. They never touch anything except what is offered to them.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 6102 Also C W. 3424 Courtesy Parasram Mehrotra

468. LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

August 28, 1932

BHAI KHAMBHATTA,

I got your letter and the ointment sent by you. I have started using the ointment. I will let you know the result.

Blessings to you both from

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 6603. Also C W 4389 Courtesy Tehmina Khambhatta

469. LETTER TO PYARELAL NAYAR

August 28, 1932

Vallabhbhai is running with the speed of an Arab horse. He is never found without a book about Sanskrit in his hands. I had not hoped for this. Nobody can equal him in the art of making envelopes. He makes them without using measurements and is guided only by his eyes in cutting the paper, and still he does not seem to take much time. His orderliness is simply wonderul. If there is anything which he has to do, he does not leave it to his memory. He does it immediately. From the time that he started spinning, he always spins at the fixed time, and so the quantity of yarn spun and the speed of spinning are increasing daily. He rarely forgets anything which he takes up. With such orderliness, there can be no confusion any time.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 386

470. *LETTER TO S. D. SATAVLEKAR*

August 28, 1932

BHAI SATAVLEKAR,

I feel somewhat anxious as I have sent you three letters but have received no reply.[1]

Yours,
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

In one of the letters I have made a request for another set of the Sanskrit Readers.

From Hindi C.W. 4765 Courtesy S D Satavlekar

471. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

August 28, 1932

DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

I prefer to write to you in Urdu unless you forbid it It is helpful to take full rest during the menstrual period On other days do only as much work as Narandas assigns to you. One whose heart is pure and free of passions has nothing to hide from the world. I do not know of any book that deals with your pain. I shall look for it.

You can consult Mrs. Lazarus, she ought to know. Dr. Sharma must have received my letter. Your Hindi script is good. Keep writing a little in this way. How long is Kudsia to stay there?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu G N 255

[1] The addressee's silence was due to the prolonged and serious illness of his son.

472. LETTER TO A GIRL

August 28, 1932

I would certainly be happy if you could remain unmarried for your whole life. But I have known many boys and girls deceive themselves. Anybody who wants to observe lifelong *brahmacharya* must be perfectly truthful and must hide nothing. He or she should also know what *brahmacharya* means It is a difficult job to control carnal desire Anybody who would do so should refrain from all forms of indulgence. That is, he should do everything not for the pleasure he may get from it but because it is necessary to do it. Accordingly, he should do nothing that is not necessary. This rule applies to eating, working, resting, dressing and all other activities. I would be happy if you have the strength for all this. If you do not have it, you should humbly admit the fact and do what all other girls do. Nobody will blame you for that. One should attempt nothing that is beyond one's capacity.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, p 386

473. LETTER TO A GIRL

August 28, 1932

You should know the past life of the person to whom you are betrothed And if you do not like him, you should ask your people to break off the engagement You should not be afraid to plainly refuse to marry him If, however, you wish to act thus, you must give up false shame, though you should not give up humility and should be ready to suffer the consequences. A person who wishes to act in this manner should have such purity of character that it cannot but produce an effect on other people.

When you get angry, you should keep silent and overcome your anger by repeating Ramanama.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp 385-6

474. A LETTER

August 28, 1932

The suggestion for five minutes' silence during the evening prayer was mine. It would certainly be fine if this practice was adopted at both times If all those present are sincere about observing silence, the noise is bound to stop The children also will get used to remaining silent for five minutes. I have even attended meetings where silence was observed for half an hour. That was in England. In our country we attach great importance to voluntary silence. *Samadhi*[1] is a kind of silence. The word *muni* also is derived from a word meaning silence. It is true that at first we feel sleepy or all kinds of thoughts come to us during the period of silence But silence is necessary to overcome these very weaknesses We are used to speaking and hearing all the time and, therefore, find it difficult to observe silence. After a little practice we shall come to like it and the peace which we shall feel then will be heavenly. As lovers of truth, we should understand the true meaning of silence and try to observe it in a manner which will accord with that meaning. Even during silence, one can repeat Ramanama. The real thing is that our minds should be ready for silence. A little reflection will reveal its importance. Cannot we sit quietly for five minutes in an assembly? Have you gone to see a play at any time? In many theatres talking is forbidden. An enthusiast like me would take his seat one hour before the time. The pleasure from the play would make it possible for him to remain silent for one hour. But this is not all. A play lasts for four to five hours. Do not the spectators have to remain quiet all that time? But we don't mind that Since the mind is ready for silence at that time, it is not felt irksome Why, then, should it be difficult to observe five minutes' silence for love of God? If there is any error in this reasoning, please point it out to me, and if there is none, observe the silence willingly and be my advocate and defend it before those who oppose it.

But we should not believe that only such short-comings as we have are worth tolerating. My view is that we should keep good

[1] The last stage in yoga

relations with all who are striving for self-improvement Tulsidas tells us that even God shuns people who love their short-comings, that is, look upon them as virtues.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I, pp 386-7

475. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

August 28, 1932

Learn well everything which the Ashram has to teach. Remember that the most important thing to be learnt is truth.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p. 385

476. LETTER TO SUSHILABEHN GANDHI

August 29, 1932

CHI. SUSHILA,

I got your letter, but I have not received Manilal's. I appreciate your asking the question, but you need not seek the advice of elders and be guided by it in every matter. I have explained the basic principles as well as I could. Bear in mind as many of them as you have been able to assimilate and do what seems best to you both How long will you go on consulting me? You should consult the self within, and do as that inner voice tells you or obey it as well as you can. I hope you remember that your question was about khadi.

The matter of the lease must be over now. I hope you got all my letters. I wrote one more letter after reading Mr. Ritch's letter. I hope Manilal got it.

At the moment it seems that Devdas has recovered completely. All three of us are well. Sardar's Sanskrit is progresing with great speed.

Even if Manilal is lazy in writing to me, you should not be so.

I hope you met Maharajkunvar and his family.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G.N. 4794

477. LETTER TO NANABHAI I. MASHRUWALA

August 29, 1932

BHAI NANABHAI,

I got your and Sushila's letter. I have replied to her that in such matters she need not consult elders. Both of them should be guided by their inner voice and follow it to the best of their ability. I have not yet received Manilal's letter. Perhaps it will arrive with the Ashram post. All three of us are quite well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 6685 Also C W 4330. Courtesy Kanubhai Mashruwala

478. LETTER TO HIRALAL[1]

August 29, 1932

I look upon myself as slow-witted. There are many things which I take more time to understand than other people But that does not trouble me. There is always a limit to the growth of the intellect but none to that of the heart.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. I, p 389

479. LETTER TO FULCHAND B. SHAH

August 30, 1932

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

I got your letter of the 21st. I see that my letter of July 3 was given to you on August 14. If it was kept back there all that time, it would be better if you ask me to address my letter to another prisoner whose turn for receiving a letter comes earlier than yours and who does not expect a letter from anybody else. In this way you will get my letter earlier. I always reply

[1] Presumably Hiralal Shah

immediately to a letter from any of you. If we look upon the whole country as ours — and we do so—then everybody should sincerely feel that every drop of water or blade of grass anywhere in the country belongs to us. We would then use with the utmost economy anything we get in any part of the country, even if it is regarded as somebody else's property. Even the things which are in our possession have been produced from the wealth of this country. How can we use things belonging to other people differently from those that belong to us, after we have realized that the whole country is ours? It is very necessary that, during this period of seclusion [in jail], all of us should ponder over this again and again and understand it properly. There is a large number of boys in your jail, and that increases the responsibility of the grown-ups. Who supplied you all those books of literature? It is very good indeed that the prisoners there have been learning new languages and crafts I will tell you one thing in order to inspire greater enthusiasm among you all Here Sardar has been studying Sanskrit like a very enthusiastic young man He has completed six parts of Satavlekar's *Pathamala* and learns five verses from the *Gita* daily. He is in Chapter III just now. He gives to it whatever free time he gets His progress is wonderful He spins also, and gives between two and two and a half hours to this work. He spins yarn of 40 counts. All this is in addition to his daily work of making envelopes. All paper with one side blank or all other useless paper on which he can lay his hands is turned into envelopes. As a result, for the last three or four months we have not had to spend money for buying a single envelope. This is the meaning of turning dust into gold. He adds to the wealth of the country, no matter in how small a measure. Similarly, we exercise the utmost economy in using everything. Mahadev is learning French and Urdu and spins yarn of up to 80 counts. Brelvi[1] is studying French, and also intends to take up Sanskrit afterwards. He, for his part, teaches Urdu to some Maharashtrian prisoners who are with him. Gangadharrao is learning Gujarati. Kishorelal is learning Kannada in Nasik [jail] with the help of some Kannadigas You have been doing good work there, of course I have mentioned all this to encourage you in your efforts.

If we cannot expect ideal behaviour from the Ashram boys, from whom else can we expect it? I am, therefore, not surprised

[1] Presumably S A Brelvi, Editor, *The Bombay Chronicle*

that you give them your certificate. Vithal must have been released now But if he is not released, please tell him that according to me, his mother's death was a deliverance for her, and, therefore, he should not grieve over it. He is a sensible man and has learnt to look upon death as a friend. I am not surprised to learn about Ravishankar's devoted service. Has his constipation been cured, or does he still suffer from it? What is the news of his son who was at Vedchhi? Where is he now? We often talk about you all and think of you.

Blessings to all friends from
BAPU

From Gujarati C W 9445-a Courtesy Chandrakant F Shah

480. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

August 30, 1932

CHI. BRAJKISAN,

Well, why didn't you mention it earlier? I got your letters but it appears as if you have not received mine. One letter in particular was quite long as it contained the replies to your queries. How is your health? How did you find your companions? Where is Krishnan Nair? Sardar and Mahadev remember you

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi G N 2393

481 LETTER TO MIRABEHN

August 31, 1932

CHI. MIRA,

I got your regular letter today. I am glad you are feeling better in body. Your recipe is not of use for me. That requires procuring goat's milk butter. I do not want to go to that trouble And I do not need to, as I am keeping excellent health without. I have, therefore, no excuse for it either. For, we may not concoct dishes for the pleasure of palate. I have done enough of that for many years. You need the change especially there. I don't hesitate to procure what I fancy I need for the body. Today I have taken milk. But I propose to continue *bajri* and see whether with milk it continues to keep the bowels in order. Without

milk it has produced most excellent results. This may not be true of all constitutions. I have discovered this that each body has its own peculiarities which have to be found out.

Tell little Lakshmi that I got her sweet little note[1] before she was locked up. I expect her to make the very best use of the time she has now got. I am glad too that Shantabehn and Gangabehn are also with you. Tell them they must make up their Gujarati and make their Hindi pucca. And give them love on behalf of us all.

I was quite prepared for the news that you will not be removed from there. You ought to be able to keep well there also. Narandas wrote to me about your orders for ghee and dates. I hope you have both. I dropped dates because I could not get good ones weevils-free. You are able to take the hard, dry thing called *kharek*[2]. I cannot.

I hope you will have permission to see some friends at least. But if you do not, after all we have no strangers. All strangers are friends including criminals as also the jailors. We have here learnt to recognize friends among animals. We have a cat who is a revelation. And if we had vision enough, we should appreciate the language of trees and plants and value their friendship.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original C.W. 6236 Courtesy Mirabehn Also G.N. 9702

482. LETTER TO KUSUMBEHN DESAI

August 31, 1932

CHI. KUSUM (SENIOR),

I got your letter. You must have got my letter in which I have explained which letters I meant. I can see from here your vacillation. But it is bound to give place one day to steadiness of mind. I will not give up my faith.

Do you write any time to Khurshedbehn[3]? All three of us are doing well. You probably know that Sardar is going ahead fast with his study of Sanskrit.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1846

[1] Which said "At last, Bapu, I too am entering the temple of Liberty. . . ."
[2] Dried dates
[3] Dadabhai Naoroji's grand-daughter

483. LETTER TO VASUDEV G. JOSHI[1]

August 31, 1932

BHAI VASUKAKA,

Narandas has sent me the letter which you wrote to him. It overflows with your love. But I am afraid I cannot avail myself of that love. There is a great difference between your complaint and mine. Ordinarily I feel nothing. I feel the pain only when I move the arm in a certain manner. In any case the pain is not increasing, and it causes no discomfort. Doctors have only advised rest. That being so, even if I wished to be examined by Dr. Deshmukh, probably the authorities would not be permitted to call him in. They would be allowed to call in a doctor from outside only if there was cause to fear something serious. There is no such cause in my case, and my health is perfectly good in other respects. I will, therefore, cherish your love for the present and avail myself of it only if it becomes necessary. Please thank Dr. Deshmukh on my behalf for his willingness to come.

When you were here, Sardar often talked about you and was even eager to meet you. But that was impossible, of course.

We were filled with joy to read that, though you suffered such pain in the leg, you did not mind it. May you live long.

You will be glad to know that Sardar has been studying Sanskrit with great earnestness.

I have preserved the socks sent by you as symbol of your love.

Please accept *vandemataram* from us all. Was the Gujarati your own?

MOHANDAS

[PS.]

At the top of your letter-paper are printed the words "Tipe Printers". I suppose "Tipe" is a misprint. Such a misprint should not be overlooked in the letter-head.

From a photostat of the Gujarati. G N 3616

[1] Proprietor of the Chitrashala Press, Poona, and a close associate of Bal Gangadhar Tilak

484. LETTER TO SHANTA S. PATEL

August 31, 1932

CHI. SHANTA (PATEL),

I had received the note which you wrote before you were released. I will wait for your promised letter. With whom do you stay? Give a detailed report about yourself. Let me know about the condition of both your mind and body. What did you read? Who were your friends? Write about all these things.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G N 4065 Also C W 16 Courtesy: Shantabehn Patel

485. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

August 31, 1932

CHI. PREMA,

I cannot think what fresh epithet of praise I should give you this time. Tell me what epithet will please you, and I will give you that.

I have not yet received the books required for Parachure Shastri. I hope I shall get them soon.

I do not think we can say that the arrival of those two women means that educated women have started joining the Ashram. There are certainly a few stray cases of such women turning up. The Ashram has not attracted any of them to stay on, unless we regard you as an educated woman as also one who has stayed on. Your case, then, will be an exception. Who will believe that one swallow makes a summer?

I am sorry about Rambhau. I do not mind your having dismissed him from the class. Keep a watchful eye on him and bring him to the right path if you can. I understand your difficulty regarding Dhiru. If you can cultivate sufficient broad-mindedness and courage, you should talk about him to Joshi[1] and Ramabehn and discover some way of winning him over to the right path. We ourselves plant thorns in our path and then

[1] Chhaganlal Joshi

complain about being pricked by them. We shall probably never reach our goal if we try to do so with our own strength but, if we march with God's strength, we shall see light even in darkness. If you retort that you do not have such love in you, my advice is of no value If, again, you argue that though I believe that I am full of love I have not been able to win over many, and ask me what right I have to advise you, and thus close the door of your heart against me, I would be helpless. I admit my imperfection. Why should you take that as an example? You should follow the advice I give you from my experience. We should not take the weaknesses of co-workers as our guide but should try to be free from them and embrace only their virtues. Moreover, unlike you I do not accept defeat but hope, with God's grace, to melt the stoniest heart and, therefore, continually strive to perfect myself.

If you have been reading out newspapers in the kitchen and jesting with people, I would certainly not approve of that. There should be perfect silence in the kitchen. Why should you read out anything there? Moreover, Narandas's attention is bound to be occupied with the things around him. I do not approve of your reading out anything in such an atmosphere. In the kitchen, even if you read you should do so seriously. Do, therefore, make this change. Consider what example you would be setting to the children if you make jokes in the kitchen and try to make people laugh. If all of them start doing what you do, the kitchen would become a "bear's garden" and discipline would vanish. Can the "smart" brain of the "smart little girl" understand all this, or has she lost her "smartness" in the Ashram?

This is enough for this time.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10301. Also C.W. 5754 Courtesy Premabehn Kantak

486. *LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE*

August 31, 1932

CHI. PANDITJI,

I got your letter. Like Anandi, others also will gradually become interested in the *Gita*, provided our own interest in it remains sincere. I do not think your trying to reform Rambhau is likely to do any good. He seems to have no sense of right and wrong. I cherish the hope that some day his eyes will open.

I will write today to Anandi advising her to drink milk and take rest. I cannot immediately suggest from here a suitable time-table for her. It will be enough if, without getting tired, she does anything in which she feels interested. Children with weak health must not feel any burden on them.

Who filled Lakshmibehn's molar? This is a very delicate job. The filling should not be done till the cavity is completely cleaned. If there is the slightest negligence in this matter, decay starts inside and that does harm.

The letters dictated by Mohan and others are good. This shows that intellectual growth has little connection with knowledge of letters. Linking the former with the latter results in considerable loss of originality. If we impart as much knowledge as can be done orally and teach the alphabet as calligraphy, children will by themselves slowly learn to read and understand books.

BAPU

[PS.]

I know about Kaka.

From a photostat of the Gujarati C.W. 232 Courtesy Lakshmibehn N. Khare

487. *LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE*

August 31, 1932

CHI. MATHURI,

I got your letter. Do you remember that I had advised you to do only as much work as you could? Your speed in carding is certainly good. But is the quality of slivers as good as the speed? Whatever you do should be neat and well done, no matter if the speed is slow. Speed will increase slowly.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati C.W. 267. Courtesy Lakshmibehn N. Khare

488. DIARY, 1932[1]

[1-6-1932 to 31-8-1932]

JUNE 1, WEDNESDAY, YERAVDA MANDIR[2]

Spun 208 rounds. Letters—Anandanand, Jaya, Radha, Ranchhod, Gajanan, Lakshmibehn, Mathuri. Rama paid a visit. Commenced Kirtikar's *Vedanta*[3].

JUNE 2, THURSDAY

Spun 278 rounds. Letters—Mira, Bhogilal Vyas, Shanti, Hemprabhadevi. Gangabehn's letter arrived. Completed *Hindu Astronomy* Commenced that by Sir Jeans.

JUNE 3, FRIDAY

Spun 214 rounds. Letters—Tilak, Pyare Ali, Feroza Taleyarkhan, Nanasaheb, Prabhavati.

JUNE 4, SATURDAY

Spun 224 rounds. Letters—Gangabehn, Parachure Shastri, Kaka. Dahyabhai and Mani paid a visit today. I did not go to see them. And I got a reply about Mirabehn that she had participated in the civil disobedience movement.

JUNE 5, SUNDAY

Spun 222 rounds. Today Dr. Mehta put my left arm into splints. Amrit Nanavati's letter came from Visapur.

JUNE 6, MONDAY

Spun 248 rounds. Letters—Jal Naoroji, Ramanlal Shah, Marie Petersen.

JUNE 7, TUESDAY

Spun 191 rounds. Letters to the Ashram — 29, including [an article] "*Titiksha* and *Yajna*", [letters]—Amritlal Nanavati (Visapur), Karsandas, Nagardas, Shankerlal. The Superintendent

[1] Continued from Vol XLIX

[2] Gandhiji described Yeravda Prison as "Yeravda Mandir" This place-name is not reproduced under subsequent dates.

[3] *Studies in Vedanta*

was of the opinion that the splints on the arm had not been set properly, so these were untied and tightened again. Hence the hand remained uncovered the whole day.

JUNE 8, WEDNESDAY

Spun 212 rounds. Durga, Anandi, Babla visited Mahadev. Received a telescope from Trivedi today.

JUNE 9, THURSDAY

Spun 225 rounds. Letters—Balkrishna Kolte (Fatehpur), Savitri (Ludhiana), Prabhashanker (Rajkot), Mira, Polak, Ghanshyamdas, Col Doyle, Raihana.

JUNE 10, FRIDAY

Spun 212 rounds. Letters—Harjivan Kotak, Ramkrishna Dalmia, Jethalal Gandhi. Met Professor and Bindu Madhav Gurle.[1] Today dispensed with the bandage. Completed Vasudev Kirtikar's *Vedanta*.

JUNE 11, SATURDAY

Spun 206 rounds. Letters—Chhaganlal Joshi, Bhattacharya—about Bipinbabu's book. Glanced through Lady Ramanathan's *Ramayana*. Dahyabhai visited Vallabhbhai. Commenced Ghanshyamdas's pamphlets.

JUNE 12, SUNDAY

Spun 216 rounds. On saltless [diet] from today. Since the splints did no good to the hand, Mira will be very much distressed. In order to please her and to test the result, I have started the saltless [diet] Simultaneously have discontinued putting soda in the *rotli*. Completed the small pamphlet by Ghanshyamdas.

JUNE 13, MONDAY

Spun 188 rounds. Letters—Saklatwala, Nanabhai, Qureshi, Col. Doyle, the Ashram (38 letters) As it is a holiday tomorrow, handed over the Ashram letters today [for posting].

JUNE 14, TUESDAY

Spun 240 rounds. Letters—Bharati, Vithal, Gangabehn. Sent winder, *Lokshikshan*, *Purushartha* and *Chandrakant* to Gangabehn. Col. Doyle paid a visit today. The Ashram mail arrived in the afternoon.

[1] They were fellow-prisoners.

JUNE 15, WEDNESDAY

Spun 199 rounds. Letters—Taramati, Mahavir, Narandas. As I had soft motion today, I did not eat *rotlis* and almonds, felt better, weighed 104.5 [lb].

JUNE 16, THURSDAY

Spun 215 rounds. Letters—Devdas, Sumangal, Bali, Agatha, Andrews, Emma Harker, Shankar Kalelkar. Telegrams to Hanumanprasad and Devdas. Urdu 4th [Reader] completed.

JUNE 17, FRIDAY

Spun 211 rounds. Letters—Vithaldas, Mira, Udit Mishra, Regarding Devdas, received his own and Hanumanprasad's telegrams.

JUNE 18, SATURDAY

Spun 219 rounds. Letters—Sarojini Naidu, Chhaganlal Joshi, Amtul. Telegram to U.P. Governor about Devdas. Sent Mira's letter to Col. Doyle.

JUNE 19, SUNDAY

Spun 204 rounds. Last evening ate saltless bread made by Merne[1] but it cannot be said to have agreed with me. Did not eat it this evening. Wrote a good number of letters. Am reading Shah's book on finance. Completed an Urdu play entitled *Shareef Ladka*. Have taken up another book entitled *Kheti*.

JUNE 20, MONDAY

Spun 198 rounds. Letters—Vrajlal, Mathuradas, Nanabhai (Akola), Sharma, Manilal, Lauri Sawyer, Damodardas, Banker, Shriram Sharma, Vaze, Radha, Shankerji, Bal, Narasimhan.

JUNE 21, TUESDAY

Spun 211 rounds. Today there were slight signs of dysentery, hence ate grapes only.

Letters—the Ashram (32 including an article on prayer and Totaramji's letter), Hemprabhadevi, Raihana, Navin, Carl Heath, Aristarchi, Lalwani, Kamala Nehru, Lalita, Rohini, Janakibehn, Lakshmi Raja.

JUNE 22, WEDNESDAY

Spun 223 rounds. Letters—Gangabehn, Khambhatta, Gladys Rigwell, Devi, Polak, Maganlal, Hanumanprasad, Tilak, Shanta Patel (Anand), Trivedi.

[1] A Scottish fellow-prisoner

Today the Major pressed me hard to take bread with milk. The weight went down by one and a half pounds. *Mosambis* arrived. Also milk. I took it.

JUNE 23, THURSDAY

Spun 210 rounds. Letters—Mira, Devdas. Today added bread to milk. As the Superintendent did not like the portion concerning my health in my letter to Mira, I altered the same.

JUNE 24, FRIDAY

Spun 208 rounds. Letter to Horace Alexander. Thomas[1] and Col. Doyle paid a visit. The visitors today were Morarbhai, Marathe, Dr. Pathak.

JUNE 25, SATURDAY

Spun 220 rounds. Khadi arrived from Ghanshyamdas. Shirinbehn sent honey. Dahyabhai and Mani called on Vallabhbhai. Commenced *Kimiyagar*.

JUNE 26, SUNDAY

Spun 224 rounds. Started using new dhotis from today. Again two boxes of grapes arrived.

JUNE 27, MONDAY

Spun 207 rounds. Letters—the Ashram (31, including "How to Observe Ahimsa"), Col. Doyle.

JUNE 28, TUESDAY

Spun 222 rounds Letters—Gangabehn, Joshi, two to Col. Doyle about my letter to Mira and about my denture. The Ashram mail arrived.

JUNE 29, WEDNESDAY

Spun 233 rounds. Letters—Birla, Khambhatta, Raihana, Lakshmidas, Madhavdas, Balwantrai, Chhaganlal Joshi, Mira, Damodardas, Premkunvar.

Today weight was 104 lb.

JUNE 30, THURSDAY

Spun 217 rounds. Letters—Jaiji, Mithubehn, Shirinbehn, Devdas.

[1] Home Member, Government of Bombay

JULY 1, FRIDAY

Spun 203 rounds. Letters from—Hiralal, Mrs. Lindsay, Mira, Privat, Satavlekar, Cresswell (his four books), Swami Anand and Kishorelal.

JULY 2, SATURDAY

Spun 244 rounds. Letters—Kishorelal, Swami. Dahyabhai and Mani paid a visit

JULY 3, SUNDAY

Spun 212 rounds. Wrote letters, history of the Ashram.

JULY 4, MONDAY

Spun 212 rounds. Letters—the Ashram (32, including "How to Observe Truth"), Manjula, Mataprasad, Dinkar, Radha, Lady Vithaldas, Fulchand Bapuji, Raojibhai, Maganbhai Chaturbhai, Harjivan Kotak. Wrote history of the Ashram.

JULY 5, TUESDAY

Spun 234 rounds. Returned the telescope to Trivedi. Received a telegram from Devdas about the death of Papa's husband, Varadachari. Sent telegrams to Papa and Raja.

JULY 6, WEDNESDAY

Spun 220 rounds. Letters—Devdas, Birla, Saraladevi, Bhai Parmanand. Doyle paid a visit—spoke about my denture and about writing a letter to Mira. I weighed 105.5 lb. Have been eating almonds for three days.

JULY 7, THURSDAY

Spun 255 rounds. Letters—Ferozabehn Taleyarkhan. Satavlekar sent the Sanskrit Readers. Vallabhbhai commenced study of Sanskrit.

JULY 8, FRIDAY

Spun 223 rounds. Letters—Raihana, Zohra, Lakshmi and Papa.

Today the Major informed me that letters to and by me now go to the Government—this week's Ashram mail has gone there. Qureshi, Mohanlal, Moolshanker Dave and Haridas paid a visit.

JULY 9, SATURDAY

Spun 236 rounds. Letters—Col. Doyle, Gokibehn. Today a few letters from I.G.[1] arrived which included those from Krish-

[1] Inspector General of Prisons

nadas and Babu Motilal Roy. Today ordered *mosambis* from here.

JULY 10, SUNDAY

Spun 215 rounds. Vallabhbhai started spinning from today. Spun 125 rounds in one hour. Today completed *Kimiyagar* and *Vaidik Vinay* Commenced the Veda number of *Ganga* and Premchandji's *Ramacharcha*.

JULY 11, MONDAY

Spun 210 rounds. Letters—the Ashram (33, including "Education").

JULY 12, TUESDAY

Spun 208 rounds. The Superintendent told me that even the letters addressed to the prisoners at Yeravda would have to be sent to the Government. Almonds arrived.

JULY 13, WEDNESDAY

Spun 227 rounds Letters—Col. Doyle, Gangabehn, Joshi. Started eating from the fresh stock of almonds.

JULY 14, THURSDAY

Spun 245 rounds. Completed Shah's *Banking* and Newcome's *Astronomy*. Commenced Iyer's *Foreign Exchange*, Kharas's *Astronomy* and *Swadhyay Samhita*

JULY 15, FRIDAY

Spun 245 rounds Letters—Khan, Velusami, Mirabehn, S. K. Sen Gupta. The District Magistrate paid a visit. Soma was released.

JULY 16, SATURDAY

Spun 232 rounds. Other Ashram letters arrived today.

JULY 17, SUNDAY

Spun 208 rounds. Completed Ashram letters.

JULY 18, MONDAY

Spun 225 rounds. Letters—the Ashram (16, including "Individual Prayer"), Devdas, Hamid Ali, Lakshmi, Khodidas. Read *The Way of the Cross* and *The Prophet's Message to the West*

JULY 19, TUESDAY

Spun 229 rounds. Today I spun a few slivers on the Gandiva.

Letters—Muriel, Aristarchi, Motilal Roy, Krishnadas, Washburn, Esther, Narahari, Devsarma, Ali Hussain, Ganeshdatta Gaud, Sailesh Chandra Majmudar, Nityanandam, Adigal, Sydney Nealy. Clayton paid a visit. Received some books from Gangabehn.

JULY 20, WEDNESDAY

Spun 232 rounds. Letters—Satavlekar, Natvarlal.

JULY 21, THURSDAY

Spun 223 rounds. Letters—Nargis, Shirin, Khurshed. Telegram to Lahore Superintendent about Khurshed. Today met Chhaganlal, Mukund Doctor and Shankar. I reprimanded Shankar about Hiralal. Today the Major gave diathermic treatment. Received a telegram about Devdas having had relapse of fever.

JULY 22, FRIDAY

Spun 221 rounds. Letters—Devdas, Mira. Today too diathermy was tried. Some books arrived. Received a list of some letters which had been posted. It contains mostly letters of the 19th.

JULY 23, SATURDAY

Spun 213 rounds. Letters—Col. Doyle, Maharaj Raghavdas, Rohini, Lala Mohanlal.

JULY 24, SUNDAY

Spun 210 rounds. The day was spent in writing letters to the Ashram, drafting a letter to be addressed to Col. Doyle and in reading.

JULY 25, MONDAY

Spun 207 rounds. Letters—the Ashram (19 letters including "Supervision Is Not Necessary"), Kaka, Col. Doyle (2), Major Bhandari.

JULY 26, TUESDAY

Spun 236 rounds. Letters—Polak, Taramati, Mathuradas, Hoyland, Devdas, Ramniklal, Mirabai, Raihana, Hamida, telegram to Malaviyaji.

JULY 27, WEDNESDAY

Spun 217 rounds. Letters—Hiralal + Lily, Rajagopalachari, Shirin, Subbiah + Lalita. Today my weight was 104 lb. It has gone down by 1.5 lb. The cause seems to be discontinuation of fruit.

JULY 28, THURSDAY

Spun 250 rounds. Letters—Harjivan Kotak, Khurshed, Rukhi, Venkataraman, Radha, Mira, Ba. Telegram to Bajpai. The Ashram mail arrived. Today commenced Locaire's *Astronomy*. For the last three days I have been reading *Sirat-un-Nabi*. Nadkarni's pamphlet.

JULY 29, FRIDAY

Spun 197 rounds. Letters—Nargis, Nirmala.

JULY 30, SATURDAY

Spun 228 rounds Letters—Najuklal, Nagindas, Amritlal, Devdas Gandhi. Telegrams to Chhaganlal, Pranjivan and Devdas.

JULY 31, SUNDAY

Spun 216 rounds. Completed Ashram letters Devoted quite some time to it. Ate bananas today after a long time.

AUGUST 1, MONDAY

Spun 216 rounds. Letters—the Ashram (36, including "Learn the *Gita* by Heart"), Birla, Brajkisan, Shyamkisan, Subhasbabu, Mira Telegram to Kamala.

AUGUST 2, TUESDAY

Spun 207 rounds. Letters—Bhaktibehn, Prabhashankar, Damodardas, Vimala, Mohanlal Bhoot, Prabhavati, Jethalal, Jivabhai.

AUGUST 3, WEDNESDAY

Spun 216 rounds. Letters—Krishnadas, Jagannath Bajaj, Jawaharlal, Hanumanprasad, Modi, Devdas + Sivaprasad. The Major has informed me that an order has been received to the effect that the outgoing mail also will hereafter be censored by himself.

AUGUST 4, THURSDAY

Spun 225 rounds Letters—Kamala Nehru, Varadarajulu, Manilal + Kallenbach, Sushila + Pragji, Narandas + Ratilal Mehta, Champa + Manjula + Ratilal Seth, Chhaganlal Mehta + Manekbai + Lilavati + Jeki + Ratilal + Mani, Manilal + Nanalal + Khimchand, Maganlal + Polak. Telegram to Chhaganlal, [letter] Sivaprasad.

AUGUST 5, FRIDAY

Spun 205 rounds Letters—Manjula, Esther, telegrams to Chhaganlal, Manjula, Narandas. Today met Brelvi, Jamnadas, Hargovan Pandya and Ramdas

AUGUST 6, SATURDAY

Spun 212 rounds. Letters—Brelvi, Chhaganlal Mehta, Taramati, Mrs Sen Gupta, Hemprabha, Hardayal Nag After a talk about Gokhale and Suganendra who are on fast it was ultimately decided that I should meet them. Accordingly I met them and they said if they had no right under the rules to demand food cooked by a Brahmin, they would give up their stand. The rules were then scrutinized and the position was explained to them, whereupon they have agreed to give up the fast. This took up a lot of time today.

AUGUST 7, SUNDAY

Spun 196 rounds. Devoted time to the Ashram mail.

AUGUST 8, MONDAY

Spun 204 rounds. Letters—the Ashram (37 incuding an article on Dr. Mehta), Manjula, Ansari, Mira + Rajenbabu, Devdas, telegram to Chhaganlal.

AUGUST 9, TUESDAY

Spun 232 rounds. Letters—Mohanlal Bhatt, Bhaktibehn, Narasinham, Jaydevi, Kothari, Prabhashankar + Balwant, Ramnik, Anandshankar, Prabhadevi, Sarojini Naidu. Chhaganlal's telegram arrived.

AUGUST 10, WEDNESDAY

Spun 217 rounds. Telegram to Maganlal. [Letters]—Umiya, Satavlekar, Hydari, Suresh Bannerji, Manjula, Chhaganlal Mehta, Benarsi, Vithaldas Purushottam, Ketkar, Karsandas, Madhavdas, Lakshmi + Papa, Harrison, Col. Doyle.

AUGUST 11, THURSDAY

Spun 208 rounds. Letters—Parachure Shastri, Shankar, Thakkar Bapa, sisters of Siena Ashram, Devdas, Sohaila, Maria, Leonard Skiff, Trivedi + Manu + Johanna + Indrasen, Verrier.

AUGUST 12, FRIDAY

Spun 216 rounds. Letters—Ramdas Gandhi, Premi Jairamdas, Shastri.

Today Col. Doyle brought with him Dr. Dalal for Vallabhbhai's and my dentures. There was an unexpected and sharp argument[1] about Ansari with the Major.

AUGUST 13, SATURDAY

Spun 206 rounds. Letters—Devdas Gandhi, Behram Khambhatta. Today also I had to go to Dr. Dalal. Ate potatoes today.

AUGUST 14, SUNDAY

Spun 223 rounds. Today also went to Dr. Dalal. Sarojini's Padma sent grapes, etc. Ate the grapes. Today started spinning on the Magan spinning-wheel. As there was a little more pain in the elbow today, I tried one sliver on the Gandiva with my left hand after several months, it worked well.

AUGUST 15, MONDAY

Spun 214 rounds. Letters to—the Ashram (44 including "Reading and Reflection[–I]", Vimala Patel, Nargis + Kamala + Sonawala, Satyamurti, Janakibehn Feeling hungry, I foolishly took a meal this afternoon despite constipation; hence everything inside was thrown out. The vomitting this time was unlaboured and easy.

AUGUST 16, TUESDAY

Spun 202 rounds. Letters—Padmaja, Bhaktibehn, Mohanlal Bhatt, Mira. Got a new denture today. Almonds arrived. Sent *Dangers of Obedience* and an account of Bipin Pal for Kemp. Yesterday completed *Vedman Adhyatma*. Commenced Herschel and other Committees' reports.

AUGUST 17, WEDNESDAY

Spun 254 rounds. Letters—Rameshwar Bazaj, Chhaganlal Mehta, Manilal Revashanker, Nautamlal Bhagwanji + Maganlal + Manjula, Mary Barr, Ratilal Desai, Devdas + Rajenbabu, Raihana, Khambhatta, Prabhashankar, Narmadanand.

Today also got the denture further improved. Conversation with the Major about Kapurthala. Ate *bajra* today.

[1] For a report of the talk, *vide The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. 1, pp. 282-3.

AUGUST 18, THURSDAY

Spun 200 rounds. Letters—Manjula, Chhaganlal Mehta + Khimchand, Lily, Hiralal, Popat Virji, Krishnadas. Yesterday the decision of the British Government about the proportion of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others in the Legislative Assemblies was received. After some discussion[1], I have written a letter to Prime Minister MacDonald. Have given in it September 20 as deadline. I have informed him that if the decision is not altered by that time, I would go on an indefinite fast from 12 o'clock on the 20th. In case the Government suggests a postponement of the fast, I have said, I would have no objection to such postponement if it seemed necessary to do so.

AUGUST 19, FRIDAY

Spun 215 rounds. Letters—Champa, Mira, Anandshankar, Kamala Nehru, Sarojini, Jaiji, Karsandas, Mahomed Alam, Agatha. Met Gangadharrao, Shankar and Devidas Ghevaria's nephew. Shankar talked quite satisfactorily He has reassured me and promised that he would never commit such a mistake again.

AUGUST 20, SATURDAY

Spun 234 rounds. Letters—Ghanshyamdas Birla, Nanalal, Abhyankar. Got the denture corrected again. Am continuing *bajra*. Yesterday ate jail *bhakhari* made of *bajra*. One pound of new stock of almonds arrived.

AUGUST 21, SUNDAY

Spun 200 rounds. Ashram mail—Andrews' book.

AUGUST 22, MONDAY

Spun 205 rounds. Letters—the Ashram (51 including "Reading and Reflection—[II]", Manilal + Sushila + Ritch, Hemprabha.

AUGUST 23, TUESDAY

Spun 205 rounds. Letters—Taramati + Dilip, Chhaganlal + Manekbai, Mayashanker + Lilavati + Chhotalal + Tryambaklal, Ratilal Desai, Lady Thackersey, Khambhatta, Kalyanji + Cutchhi, Riahana, Devdas. Fruits arrived from Padmaja.

[1] *Vide* Appendix

AUGUST 24, WEDNESDAY

Spun 235 rounds Letters—Darbari, Bhaktibehn, Nirmala Mashruwala, Prabhashankar, Velanbehn, Raja, Mira. Two seers of *kagadi*[1] almonds arrived today. My weight was 103 [lb.]

AUGUST 25, THURSDAY

Spun 210 rounds. Letters—Padmaja, Premi, Begum Mohammad Alam, Krishnadas, Satavlekar, Radha, Govinddas (Jaipur), Govinddas (Jabalpore), Krishnanath, Benarsi, Fatehbahadur, Manilal, Revashankar + Gulab + Tilak + Maganlal, Count Lassodofie, Gijubhai, Gokhale, Jethalal Shah, Bali + Manu, Jeki, Chhaganlal Mehta, Manekbai Mehta, Keshavlal Ambalal, Nani Menon. Got the denture corrected again today. Commenced new stock of almonds. Completed Maeterlink. Commenced Jeans's *The Mysterious Universe*

AUGUST 26, FRIDAY

Spun 215 rounds Letters—Tara Mashruwala, Taramati, Kaka, Mridula, Hansa Mehta, Manibehn. The denture was examined again. Col Doyle called and spoke about Kaka[2], about the Prime Minister's letter, and the denture.

AUGUST 27, SATURDAY

Spun 220 rounds. Letters—Hiralal, Kaka, Ba, Kevalram Dayaram, P. N. Lal Verma. Today took baker's bread in place of one of *bajra*. Put into the eyes the drops sent by the Major.

AUGUST 28, SUNDAY

Spun 225 rounds. Commenced *Gandhi Vichar Dohan*. Letter to Devdas about not going to Rangoon.

AUGUST 29, MONDAY

Spun 227 rounds. Letters—the Ashram (54 including "Action—Thoughtful and Thoughtless"), Khambhatta, Abhyankar, Nautamlal, Papa + Lakshmi, Elizabeth Howard, Sunder Bhagvat, Andrews, Savitri, Padmaja. Today ate *rotli* made of wheat. A cat gave birth to kitten. Today completed the first reading of a history of the Ashram.

[1] A kind of almonds with a fragile shell

[2] Doyle informed Gandhiji about D B. Kalelkar having been transferred to the Sabarmati Jail and asked him to prevail upon Kalelkar to give up spinning so that he might be free from back-ache *Vide* "Letter to D. B Kalelkar", pp 426-9

AUGUST 30, TUESDAY

Spun 203 rounds. Letters—Lily, Hiralal, Devi West, Nandubehn, Revashankar, Meghji, Shastri, Sushila, Manilal, Nanabhai, Sharda Mehta, Noorbanu, Col. Doyle. My denture was examined again.

AUGUST 31, WEDNESDAY

Spun 209 rounds. Commenced milk today. Letters to Damodardas + Radha + Brijkrishna + Santok, Velabehn, Maganlal Mehta + Manilal, Ramdas, Nimu, Fulchand, Bhaktibehn.

From the Gujarati original S N 19337

APPENDIX

DISCUSSION ON COMMUNAL AWARD[1]

August 17, 1932

The communal decision was published today Bapu went about his work till the evening as if nothing had happened . I said the new constitution was worse than the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms "Certainly", replied Bapu. "Those reforms were based on the Lucknow agreement between Congress and the Muslim League But this constitution seeks to create such divisions in the country that it can never again stand up on its own legs" Just before the evening prayer he said to me, "Well, you and the Sardar think over the situation and tell me whatever you feel like saying The letter to Samuel Hoare details the steps I should take in order to deal with the present situation I have therefore to serve the British Government with a notice" . and then Bapu began to write the letter to MacDonald

August 18, 1932

After finishing it in the morning Bapu said, "You stop spinning for a while and go through this letter so that it may be sent at once" The Sardar and I read it Then he [Sardar] said, "There is no reference in the letter to other parts of the decision May not this be misinterpreted to mean that they are approved by you?" "No", replied Bapu "My views are well known Still if you wish, I will insert one paragraph, although I would then have to enter into argument In this letter I propose to leave out all argument, this having been included in the letter to Samuel Hoare." I suggested that Bapu should only say his soul rebelled against the decision as a whole, but part of it was so vicious that he would lay down his life in the attempt to get it annulled "No", said Bapu "No such comparison may fairly be instituted If it were, they would say that I wanted to get the decision annulled in its entirety and had seized upon a certain part of it as a pretext I do want the whole decision to go. But at night I thought for a moment over the question whether other points should be included and decided against their inclusion."

The same subject was discussed in the evening Bapu observed, "I cannot put in other things at all, for that would be tantamount to mixing politics with religion The two questions are in fact distinct from each other" He then continued, "I have rehearsed everything in my own mind Everything you have suggested was considered by me before I reached the decision Separate electo-

[1] *Vide* pp 383-4

rates for the Muslims and the rest are fraught with danger They will combine with the British to suppress the Hindus But I can think of methods by which the combination can be dealt with. When once the outsider who foments quarrels is gone, we can tackle our problems with success But as regards the so-called untouchables I have no other remedy How possibly am I to explain things to these poor fellows? To draw suffering on oneself when misfortune dogs one's footsteps is no novelty How did Sudhanva fall into the pan full of hot oil and how did Prahlad embrace a pillar of red-hot iron? There will be many satyagraha movements even after the attainment of swaraj I have often had the idea that after the establishment of swaraj I should go to Calcutta and try to stop animal sacrifice offered in the name of religion. The goats at Kalighat are worse off even than untouchables They cannot attack men with their horns They can never throw up an Ambedkar from their midst My blood boils when I think of such violence Why do they not offer tigers instead of goats?"

In the morning we discussed the possible repercussions of Bapu's step I said, "It will be misinterpreted in a variety of ways Here in India there will be senseless imitation of it while in America they will say Gandhi obtained his release by his fast " "I know", replied Bapu "In America they will swallow anything, and there are British agents ready to help them to do so. Many will even say that I am now a bankrupt, that my spirituality is not paying dividends, therefore, I committed suicide like cunning insolvents And in this country there will be blind imitation, and misinterpretation The Government will perhaps release me and let me die outside prison, or perhaps they will let me die in jail, as in the case of MacSwiney Our own men will be critical Jawaharlal will not like it at all He will say we have had enough of such religion. But that does not matter When I am going to wield a most powerful weapon in my spiritual armoury, misinterpretation and the like may never act as a check "

August 19, 1932

The Superintendent came and asked why Bapu was going to take such a drastic step He replied there was no alternative. The Superintendent suspected that Hoare had perhaps not even informed the British Cabinet Bapu said, "I believe he must have informed them But your suspicion is not ill-placed Hoare is a man of such a type that he might not inform them. And when the Cabinet comes to know of it, he will say he did not think he should worry them with the case of a man who was ready to die for such a trifle But I think if he did not inform the Cabinet, he would lose his career as well as reputation " The Superintendent asked what effect Bapu's fast would have in England "None", replied Bapu "Even if all the untouchables in a body ask for joint electorates, the British can say that in the case of a minority which has been suppressed for centuries they alone can decide what is good for it; the suppressors cannot understand its needs " He then continued, "My whole

life has been passed that way This last step of mine is the crown of my career I had no idea that I would have to give up my life for this But it is a noble object The beginning was made 50 years ago, when as a child I began to smoke and then felt I was doing the wrong thing and must make a clean breast of it Since then I have made continuous progress in the knowledge and the practice of truth "

The Collector came in the afternoon and said "What can they do if they are not to give such a decision? There must be some solution In matters like this you cannot insist upon absolute justice and right " "No", replied Bapu "The solution may be unreasonable but it must be acceptable to all But there is no agreement at the back of this decision They asked us for a solution in England but they did not see that they were addressing a packed house, and therefore their demand could never be satisfied "

In the morning Bapu said, "It is a law of satyagraha that when a man has no weapon in his hands and when he cannot think of a way out, he should take the final step of giving up his body What did the Rajput women do? What did Kamalavati about whom we were reading the other day do? She had resolved that she would not fall alive into the hands of the enemy She therefore embraced death as a dear friend "

August 20, 1932

The Sardar and I thought today that the news of Bapu's impending fast should be passed on to the outside world by some means or other But that was impossible without a breach of Bapu's promise He has promised that he on his part would never send the news out And we could not be disloyal to him The Sardar was very much worried

August 21, 1932

"People will tell us", said the Sardar, "that we were here with you and should have somehow or other sent the information outside, say, through Dahyabhai who sees me every week "

"That is not to be thought of ", replied Bapu "Can we tell them that we would now inform the outside world of this by some means or other? We have promised to maintain absolute secrecy from our side, and that is the end of the matter so far as we are concerned You must have noticed that in the letter I have addressed to MacDonald I have said with perfect indifference that if he made it possible, I wanted public opinion to be affected by my letters What can they do, supposing Malaviyaji and Rajagopalachari come to know about the impending fast this very day? It is a matter of only a few days I think it is necessary to give a slight shock even to these two leaders. Rajaji is a clever man and will at once understand why I was driven to take this step The shock will help him to understand it Don't you see that I have advanced no argument in this letter? Could I not have framed a long indictment? But I restricted myself to this one point for which

I would gladly sacrifice my life I had reserved my life for a nobler purpose, but meanwhile this occasion has arisen What can I do now? The satyagraha is directed not against Congressmen who are in jail, but against non-Congressmen in order to make them understand what they are doing. Don't you see none of them is at all perturbed by the British Government's proposals as regards untouchability? This inertia is sickening, and it cannot be dealt with in any other way The possible consequences of separate electorate for Harijans fill me with horror Separate electorate for all other communities will still leave room for me to deal with them, but I have no other means to deal with untouchables. These poor fellows will ask why I who claim to be their friend should offer satyagraha simply because they were granted some privileges, they would vote separately but vote with me They do not realize that the separate electorate will create division among Hindus so much so that it will lead to bloodshed. Untouchable hooligans will make common cause with Muslim hooligans and kill caste Hindus Has the British Government no idea of all this? I do not think so And to cap it all, they have brought in Irwin The Archbishop of Canterbury said they could not do without Irwin's co-operation And now the Christian Irwin is a party to this nefarious scheme"

"No, no, Vallabhbhai Previous publication of the news will only do harm, sudden shock is the treatment required It would be different if you felt that this was a serious blunder You are both associated with it, and therefore you are responsible to some extent, but the final responsibility rests with me alone, for I have done what suggested itself to me. This is a case in which no one else's consent is necessary When I fasted during the Bombay riots, C R Das and Motilal Nehru insisted that I should have consulted them before undertaking it But I explained that the fast was undertaken by me not as a Congressman but as a man I observed a certain religion and I fasted in accordance with its doctrine I said the same thing to Hakim Ajmal Khan as regards the fast connected with Hindu-Muslim tension Now too it is for me a religious and not a political question."

August 22, 1932

[Answering Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji said]. ". . The suppressed classes are in great peril today The pity of it is that no one else is aware of it. It may be that when I am released, the situation might have deteriorated to such an extent that it cannot be retrieved Numerous untouchables might have been converted to Islam or else the caste Hindus might have crushed them into submission This part of the British Government's decision seems so dangerous to me that even if all other parts had been acceptable, I would have been compelled to take such a step in order to combat it . . ."

The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol I, pp 291-304

SOURCES

Advance English daily published from Calcutta.

Ashram Observances in Action Translated from Gujarati by Valji G. Desai, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1955

Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh (Hindi). H L. Sharma, Ishwarsharan Ashram Mudranalaya, Prayag, 1957.

Bapuna Patro–6. G. S Gangabehnne (Gujarati)· Ed. Kakasaheb Kalelkar, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1960.

Bapuna Patro–4 Manibehn Patelne (Gujarati) Ed. Manibehn Patel, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1957.

Bapuna Patro–9 Shri Narandas Gandhine, Pt I, (Gujarati)· Ed Narandas Gandhi, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1964.

Bapuni Prasadi (Gujarati) Mathuradas Trikumji, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1948.

Bhavnagar Samachar· Gujarati weekly published from Bhavnagar.

(*The*) *Bombay Chronicle*· English daily published from Bombay.

(*The*) *Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I: Translated from the Gujarati and edited by Valji G. Desai, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1953

GANDHI SMARAK SANGRAHALAYA, NEW DELHI: Central Museum and Library of Gandhian literature and documents.

GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY, HOME DEPARTMENT.

(*The*) *Hindustan Times*. English daily published from New Delhi.

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol I (Gujarati). Ed Narahari D. Parikh, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1948.

My Dear Child: Ed. Alice M. Barnes, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1956

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad (Hindi): Ed. Kaka Kalelkar, published by Martand Upadhyaya, 1953.

SABARMATI SANGRAHALAYA: Library and records containing documents relating to Gandhiji.

Satyagrahashramno Itihas (Gujarati): Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1950.

CHRONOLOGY

(*June 1, 1932—August 31, 1932*)

June 1 Gandhiji's incarceration in the Yeravda Central Prison continued. Gandhiji wrote to Mirabehn about his decision to decline to see visitors if the Government did not permit her to see him.

Satyagraha Ashram at Wardha seized by police.

June 3 Report of the Franchise Committee, under Lord Lothian, published.

June 4: Gandhiji received Government's reply refusing permission for Mirabehn seeing him Gandhiji decided not to see visitors.

June 6: Wrote the article "Concerning *Titiksha* and *Yajna*" for the inmates of the Ashram.

June 9 Wrote to Col. E. E. Doyle concerning his resolve not to have visitors unless Government revised its decision about Mirabehn.

June 10 Met follow-prisoners—Jethalal Gandhi and Bindu Madhav Gurle.

June 14 Col E. E. Doyle paid a visit

June 15 Gandhiji received a wire about Devdas's illness in Gorakhpur jail.

June 18 Wired to Sir Malcolm Hailey requesting Devdas's transfer to Yeravda or Dehradun, and forwarded Mirabehn's letter to Government denying the alleged charges.

June 19: Wrote the article "Prayer".

June 24: Col E E. Doyle paid a visit.

June 25: Gandhiji wrote the article "How to Observe Ahimsa".

July 3. Wrote the article "How to Observe Truth".

July 5: Sent wires of condolence to C Rajagopalachari and his daughter on the death of Varadachari.

July 6: Col. E. E. Doyle paid a visit.

July 8 T. B. Sapru and M. R. Jayakar resigned from Consultative Committee.

July 10 Gandhiji wrote the article "Education".

July 13. In a letter to Col E E Doyle, protested against delay in attending to his correspondence and asked for clarification.

July 17 Wrote the article "Individual Prayer".

July 21. Received a wire about Devdas's relapse of fever. Met fellow-prisoners—Chhaganlal Joshi, Shankar and Mukund.

July 24 Wrote the article "Supervision Is Not Necessary". Wrote to Col E E Doyle regarding his correspondence in Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu

July 31: Wrote the article "Learn the *Gita* by Heart".

August 3 Dr Pranjivan Mehta died in Rangoon.

August 4 Gandhiji sent a wire of condolence to Chhaganlal, son of Dr Pranjivan Mehta.

August 5 Met fellow-prisoners—Jamnadas, Brelvi, Ramdas and Hargovan

August 6 Met two fellow-prisoners who were on fast and persuaded them to give it up.

August 7 Paid tribute to Dr Pranjivan Mehta in an article

August 14· Wrote the article "Reading and Reflection–I".

August 17. MacDonald's Communal Award announced.

August 18 In his letter to Ramsay MacDonald, Gandhiji announced his decision to go on a fast unto death from 20th September unless Communal Award was withdrawn.

August 19· Met fellow-prisoners—Gangadharrao, Shanker and Devidas Ghevaria's nephew.

August 21 Wrote the article "Reading and Reflection–II".

August 26 Col E E. Doyle paid a visit and requested Gandhiji to reconsider his decision to undertake a fast

August 28 Gandhiji wrote the article "Action—Thoughtful and Thoughtless".

INDEX OF TITLES

INDEX

ERRATA

PAGE	FOR	READ
78 Item 80, paragraph 2, Line 1	smiling No	smiling, no
160 Item 165, title	*FEBOZABEHN*	*FEROZABEHN*
362 line 7	*Il Pensoroso*	*Il Penseroso*
413 Title and courtesy-line	Hari-ichchha S. Kamdar	Hari-ichchha P Kamdar